FYHANCE on the GRAVE of COLMER

London: Published as the Act directs by E.D. Davies May 1787.

DESCRIPTIVE EXCURSIONS

THROUGH

SOUTH WALES

AND

MONMOUTHSHIRE,

IN THE YEAR 1804,

AND THE

FOUR PRECEDING SUMMERS.

BY E. DONOVAN, F.L.S.

AUTHOR OF THE

"*BRITISH ZOOLOGY*,"

IN TWENTY VOLUMES, &c.

EMBELLISHED WITH

THIRTY-ONE PLATES OF VIEWS, ANTIQUITIES, &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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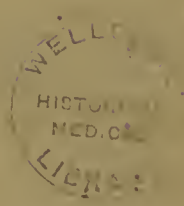
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ADVERTISEMENT.

FIVE years are now elapsed since the author of these "Descriptive Excursions" was induced to gratify a wish he had long before conceived, of devoting two or three of the summer months, to an extensive tour of observation through both the north and southern districts of the Cambrian Principality, and the English counties on its borders. With this design he left the metropolis in the company of a friend, early in the summer, and pursuing the nearest route, entered South Wales shortly after by the lower road through Monmouthshire.

His views in this excursion embraced a wide and copious field for general observation. He was anxious to survey the scenery of a country abounding in the most romantically wild, and delightful situations this island can afford;—to muse over those hoary remnants of antiquity that are still extant, those evidences of events

connected with the most distant records of the historic page, and which having survived the wreck of time, and the devastations of man, yet proudly call to memory the military prowess of ages past, or evince their munificence, their piety, or their superstition;—and above all, to become acquainted, if only in a remote degree, with the manners of a people, who, for the space of so many ages have retained the language, the customs, habits, and opinions of our hardy ancestors, the early Britons, unbroken, nay unshaken, amidst the conflicts of internal tumult, and domestic factions, or the inroads of foreign innovators.—These are peculiarities that powerfully arrest the regard of every thinking traveller, whatever may be his more immediate views while passing over this charming tract of country; and these were among the chief inducements that in the first instance excited a desire in the breast of the writer to visit the regions of Southern Cambria.

But there were other motives still that could not operate with less effect upon his mind than the preceding; he was desirous of acquiring at least, such a knowledge of the natural, as well as civil, and ancient history of that interesting portion of the British empire, as the casual opportunities of the traveller would allow; and in this respect the most sanguine expectations he had cherished, were not materially disappointed. Indeed

in

in traversing an extent of country so admirably adapted for the research of the naturalist, and so likely to reward his labours, it is scarcely possible to have been otherwise; nor could it be imagined, when such an opportunity was afforded, the author should abstract his mind from one of his most favourite pursuits. He has, on the contrary, taken much real pleasure in the prosecution of those enquiries, and in the progress of the present volumes has most commonly adverted to this interesting topic on every occasion, in which he was inclined to believe those observations material for the information of the general reader.

The first excursion comprised a route of many hundred miles, in various directions, through the Principality; the result of which afforded so much satisfaction to the author, that from year to year as the summer returned, he has invariably bestowed a few weeks of leisure to repeat his visits to those parts, and in the course of which he has performed those different excursions through South Wales in particular, that are now consolidated, for the sake of perspicuity, into the more comprehensive form of a single journey.

After the completion of his first tour, the author entertained some remote idea of submitting his observa-

tions to the public; but aware of the importance of this subject, he was not disposed, upon more mature deliberation, to rest his pretensions to the public notice on the slender claim of a solitary tour, undertaken chiefly for amusement: he determined to revisit that country again, and again, in the hope of obtaining the most satisfactory information a stranger can avail himself of. And thus, although the space of time elapsed since the first of these excursions was completed be considerable, the interval has been in a certain measure employed to the advantage of its ultimate appearance: that interval affording the author the surest means of ascertaining, as he thinks it will appear, a variety of particulars which the hasty tourist can seldom have it in his power to ascertain with due precision.

The connecting features of these tours are preserved by the insertion of such local incidents as serve occasionally to reflect some light upon the peculiarities of the Cambrian character: these appearing, as they were written at the time of their occurrence, in an epistolary correspondence maintained at the desire of a dear and inestimable friend, very far removed from the scenes described; in conformity however with the modification adopted afterwards, much of this extraneous matter has been suppressed, and the dates, with few exceptions,

are

are omitted also to avoid perplexity.—But in the subsequent additions, where the precise description of particular objects demand more immediate attention, the author has no design to shield himself from blame, by affirming his remarks to be the offspring of momentary observation, and misapprehension. He has no hesitation, on the contrary, in asserting them to be advanced deliberately, in the conviction of being correct. Upon a candid perusal of the far greater number of those tours through Wales that have been recently ushered before the world, there is much to admire, but there is also too much reason to apprehend the amusement, rasher than the information of the reader, has been most frequently consulted. Should the author then presume to be unfashionable in this respect by descending to the simplicity of intrinsic information, it is because he feels persuaded a book of that description even will be acceptable. He is perfectly aware that he may at times have corrected the sallies of fancy at the risque of proving himself a dull companion, but he does not greatly fear to incur the censure due to an unfaithful one.

The two volumes now before the public, will be found to include the more frequented route of tourists upon the lower road of South Wales, commencing from

Bristol and the shore of Gloucestershire, through Monmouthshire as far as Pembroke, with every collateral deviation, in various directions, that can be conveniently undertaken. The midland route along the upper counties remains untouched, but should it appear congenial with the public wish, a third volume may possibly appear hereafter, in which that route will be comprised.

Having thus far endeavoured to explain the object of the present "*Descriptive Sketch of South Wales,*" it alone remains to speak of the plates with which it is embellished. In the execution of these, the author has been studious only to be accurate, by rendering them as faithful transcripts of the various objects they profess to represent, as circumstances would allow. To say more would be unbecoming in the author, since whatever may be their merits or their imperfections, they have been executed with the strictest regard to imitation, from drawings taken by himself upon the spot.

ARRANGEMENT

ARRANGEMENT

OF THE

PLATES.

WITH NOTES.

PLATE I.

Penance on the grave of Colmer, in Christ Church, Monmouthshire.

FROM a sketch taken by the author on the evening preceding Trinity thursday, in the year 1803, when this extraordinary ceremony was performed, according to ancient custom, as described in page 175 of Vol. 1.

To face the title page of the first volume.

PLATE II.

Antique basso relievo of Roman sculpture, found in Caerleon castle.

The emblematic figure of a Venus, or an Amphitrite, with a Dolphin sporting in the palm of her hand, is carved in bold relievo upon the face of this stone. This antique *morceau* was introduced in the first instance to the attention of the public, through the medium of Mr. H. P. Wyndham's tour in Monmouthshire, some years ago; Mr. Wyndham having observed it on climbing up the lofty old tower, or keep of Caerleon castle, which has since been demolished. It is described by this agree-

able

able writer as a most curious piece of Roman antiquity, the sculpture of which he tells us is particularly fine. Since that period it has attracted the remark of several writers, or at least has been mentioned by them, in strains of similar compliment, with what degree of truth the reader will be able to form a tolerable opinion from the plate accompanying this account. It is remarkable, that no one who speaks of it, should have had the curiosity to examine the lower, or convex surface of the stone attentively, although that part is ornamented in a peculiar manner. By attending to this, we may be enabled to form some rational conclusion as to the purpose for which the stone was originally intended.

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PLATE III.

Under side of the antique Basso relievo of Roman sculpture, found in Caerleon castle.

Being the same as that depicted in the preceding plate. The indented work serves clearly to shew that the lower, as well as the upper surface of the stone was designed to be exposed to view, which could only be conveniently accomplished by laying it in an incumbent, or horizontal posture. This suggests an idea that it must have been originally intended for the patella, or summit of a Roman altar, and might have been elevated on a stand or pedestal, in a manner somewhat similar to the little figure exhibited in the back ground of the plate. Should this conjecture be visionary, there is at least every reason for presuming that it once formed part of the decorations of some temple erected by the Romans in the ancient city of Caerleon. The stone has been nearly, or rather completely circular, the greater portion of which remains entire, but the

the rest is broken off, and lost. There is a remarkable perforation that passes entirely through the stone, from the upper to the lower surface, and which is broken into by the fracture the stone sustained. It should be observed, that this perforation is not situated in the central point of the circle, formed by the segment of the circumference, but a little obliquely. The utility of this perforation is by no means obvious. It may have either served to receive an iron cramp to secure the stone to the summit of a pedestal, or might have been purposely left as an aperture or passage through the stone, when laid in an horizontal position, for some other use that cannot easily be explained in the present day. This stone is flat on the upper surface, and convex below: the diameter is exactly twenty-five inches and an half, and its greatest thickness six inches.

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PLATE IV.

Elegant remains of Roman earthen-ware, and a fibula, discovered in the Broadway, Caerleon.

The objects represented in this plate, are depicted in the true size of the originals. One of these, the most conspicuous, is the fragment of a vessel of fine Roman ware, ornamented with a groupe of figures in relievo: there is so much taste in the design of this, that we cannot hesitate in admitting it to be a genuine Roman antique, although the impression seems to have been clumsily struck out of the potter's mould. Immediately below this, is shewn a much smaller fragment of the same kind of pottery, being part of a stand to the same, or a similar vessel as that of the ornamental piece above-mentioned: part of the inscription impressed on this stand, is broken off.

off. Over the piece of earthenware in the center, is shewn the handle of another vessel, very curiously ornamented. The figure above, represents the interior surface of part of a Roman basin, the legend impressed in the bottom of which, is very fair, and perfect. These are all formed of a red, well-baked clay, and are highly glazed. The piece lying behind, is curiously marked with intersecting lines, and is of a dirty brown colour. At the bottom of this groupe lies the Roman fibula first-mentioned, which is of iron, plated with fine brass, to all appearance the *Aes Corinthium* of the ancients, or rather their *Aes Orichalcum*, and which, if it does not contain a portion of gold, as some believe, is very little inferior to it in brilliancy.

To face p. 152. *vol.* 1.

PLATE V.

A fragment of ornamental Roman pottery and coins, found in the Broadway, Caerleon.

The first of these affords us a striking example of the talents of the Roman manufacturers in ancient times, who in their most trifling productions, evinced a taste for the fine arts, that would do credit to any age. This is the fragment of a vessel to all appearance about the size of a small basin. The convex surface has been decorated with human figures, birds, and other ornaments, in a manner the drawing will best explain. It was discovered in the same spot as the remains of Roman pottery shewn in the preceding plate.

Among the coins is one of MAXIMUS, in copper, bearing his head and name, and on the reverse, PIETAS AUG. with the instruments of sacrifice: this is the largest. The next in size is one of Constantinus. A third, of

VIC-

VICTORIANUS, is smaller than either of the rest. The whole of these were found in the same place as the pottery, in digging about five feet below the surface of the ground.

Refers to page 152. *vol.* 1.

PLATE VI.

Seal of the ancient See of Menevia, now St. David's, a Roman fibula, and other antiquities dug up in Caerleon.

This seal of the ancient Menevia is engraven from an impression taken in wax by the clergyman of St. Cadoc's, Caerleon. The original seal, which is of copper, was in the possession of Mr. Williams, a currier in the town, at the time the impression was taken from it. The Roman fibula of brass, and the rest of the antiques in this plate, were found in different parts of the town by the inhabitants. Among them is an indifferent coin of Allectus, and another of Carausius, greatly mutilated.

Refers to page 152. *vol.* 1.

PLATE VII.

Antique triangular Tile, and fragment of a Roman Brick, from Caerleon.

The triangular tile delineated in this plate, independently of the remarkable devices embossed upon the face of it, is an acquisition of some interest to the antiquary. Tiles or bricks of this kind are mentioned by the ancients. Marcus Vitruvius, in his admirable work on architecture, dedicated to Augustus, speaks of such. They are also strongly recommended for general use by Barbaro, in his Commentary on Vitruvius: he advises that they should be a foot long on each side, and an inch and an half in thickness.

thickness. Those tiles, it is observed by Barbaro, would have many advantages above others, as being more commodious in the management, of less expence, and better appearance, adding much strength and beauty to the mural angles where they fall gracefully into an indented work. Such is exactly the description of the triangular tile figured in plate seven, except only, that it measures no more than nine inches on each side, instead of twelve. It rather exceeds an inch in thickness, and has on the back part a sort of rude projection, by means of which it appears to have been imbeded and secured within the mortar of a wall.

How far the allusion of the head embossed upon the center of this tile may admit of explanation, appears uncertain. The brow encircled with a radiated crown, or rays of glory, with the cross above, would lead us to conclude it was designed for an angel, but the appearance of two short pointed ears, like those of a cat, and which are perfectly distinct, precludes the possibility of allowing this interpretation. Still it must have been an emblem of Christianity. It may be intended for a demon, with the cross over it, implying the power of Christ over the devil. The figure of the ancient cross, unquestionably proves it to have been the work of the Christians; perhaps of the Britons in the first ages of Christianity, while the mode of building they had been taught by the Romans, yet prevailed. This brick, with the greater part of another (the only two of the kind remembered by the inhabitants to have been found in Caerleon) was turned up in the soil, by a man digging in a field belonging to Mr. Gethin, which lies upon a spot once occupied by part of the ancient city of Caerleon. This is sufficiently

ciently clear from the quantity of building materials found in digging, besides its situation immediately within the boundary of the old city walls, which extends the whole way along one side of the field.

No doubt remains as to the identity of the lower piece of brick being of Roman manufacture, the legend of the second legion of Augustus being distinctly impressed upon it. This, as a fragment, is remarkable for the clearness of the impression, Leg. II. Aug. as well as for the extraordinary size of the brick, which, when perfect, appears to have been of a quadrangular form, about twenty inches in length, and the same in breadth. The center was marked with several concentric circles.

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PLATE VIII.

Inscriptions on three ancient Bricks, Caerleon.

Fragments of two bricks, bearing dissimilar inscriptions, and a third brick entire, impressed with the signature of the second Augustan legion, LEG. II. *N* G, instead of LEG. II. AUG. The latter, a brick of very singular construction, is represented in the upper part of the plate, the figure of which will afford a more correct idea than any verbal description: its serrated edge, whether designed for utility, or as an ornament, is remarkable. A fragment of the same kind of hollow tile as that delineated in plate 12, but bearing a different legend, is shewn below. The impression on the smallest piece, is in a different character from either, but unluckily this is broken. Neither of the last two inscriptions, are remembered to have been observed upon the tiles dug up in Caerleon before by the inhabitants, and the serrated brick is supposed

posed to be unique *. This is seven inches and a half long, five inches and a half broad, and two inches and three quarters in thickness. Its length and breadth, when perfect, is uncertain, for it is evidently nothing more than the upper corner of a brick, once far more considerable in point of size.

Refers to page 152. *vol.* 1.

PLATE IX.

Roman Tile, Lamp, Coins, &c., dug up in Caerleon.

The large Roman tile described in page 153 of the first volume, is delineated in the remoter part of this plate. Its dimensions, as there stated, is twenty-three inches; fifteen inches at the broadest end, and at the narrowest about one inch less. This very curious tile is the individual specimen mentioned by Mr. Wyndham in his tour some years ago, as being then in the possession of Mr. Pritchard, shoe maker, in Caerleon, and whose daughter still possesses it. The idea is plausible, that tiles of this kind were chiefly employed in making drains, water troughs, and other aqueducts of a similar nature; in confirmation of this, there is a remarkable longitudinal raised ledge, or ridge along each side of it, with a sort of groove, into which it is apprehended the lateral tiles were fitted in the construction of the trough, the length of which might be readily increased by the addition of a greater number of the same tiles to the extremity of the rest. I have observed that all the inscriptions upon the fragments of this peculiar kind of tile found in Caerleon in our first

* Mr. Manby gives a little sketch of a serrated brick from this fragment, but which from its imperfect resemblance, we must conclude to have been drawn from memory.

visit,

visit, were uniformly alike, bearing the legend LEG. II. AUG. but in a recent visit to the same place, we discovered the fragment of one with a legend altogether different, as may be seen in plate 8.

Mr. Coxe in his History of Monmouthshire, (p. 85.) gives an outline of this tile, most probably from recollection, for by some specious oversight, instead of being of an equal breadth throughout, it resembles a truncated pyramid, being above one third broader at the base than at the narrowest extremity. This circumstance is stated lest it might mislead the antiquary who should venture to speculate upon the purpose for which such a tile was contrived for the Roman builders.

An ancient sarcophagus was discovered about five or six years ago, at the foot of the castle mount, composed entirely of bricks, of that particular kind which is shewn in the lower part of the plate. They were two feet square, and of considerable thickness. This materially exceeds the size of our brick, which is only eight inches wide, and two inches and a quarter deep, but the form is the same, and the legend as usual on Roman bricks, LEG. II. AUG.

The antique lamp, a very perfect specimen, was observed in digging in the road called the broadway. This is placed upon a fragment of stone, inscribed with Roman characters, but too imperfect to admit of any accurate interpretation. Mr. Leman reads the letters A. L. T. R. cut upon it, *Animo libens Trajanus*, according to the notes inserted in the appendix to Mr. Manby's tour through Monmouthshire.

The coins could only be conveniently represented in the size of the originals. The two smallest figures shew the obverse and reverse of a little Roman piece of copper money, an emblematic head of Rome, with the legend URBS ROMA, and on the reverse the wolf suckling the two infants, Romulus and Remus. Coins of this kind have been found at Caerleon, Caerwent, and at Portscuit, near the landing place at the Black rock at the New passage on the Monmouth shore of the Severn. The largest coin is of Postumus, a radiated head, with a galley on the reverse. Coins of Postumus occur in silver, but this is one of the Roman *Nummi Bracteati*, or plated pieces of money, being of iron, coated with a thin leaf of silver, or tin; the impression is very perfect.

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PLATE X.

Inscribed and ornamented Stones, in the wall of Mr. Butler's Cold Bath, Caerleon.

That which is placed in the upper part of the plate, is no doubt of the sepulchral kind, a tablet inscribed to the memory of Vibius, or Vibio, a proconsul, who died at the age of fifty-one.

The stone directly beneath this, is charged with a far more ambiguous inscription, upon which I shall not venture to impose any reading, since it has been declared by several learned friends, well skilled in antiquarian researches, (and to whose opinion I must pay considerable deference,) to be unintelligible, or at least so to them, though they neither distrust its originality, nor dispute its claim to remote antiquity. But I would refer the reader, desirous of further information respecing it, to the primitive bardic

bardic alphabet, *Coelbren y Beirdd* of the early Britons, of which examples are still extant in several well-authenticated inscriptions, scattered over various parts of the kingdom, as likely to reflect some light upon this subject. And further, I should in particular recommend him to compare it with other inscriptions in which the ancient British, or bardic letters, are intermixed in the same inscription with the Roman, if an opportunity of that kind should occur. The celtic or runic characters might perhaps be consulted with advantage on this occasion likewise.

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PLATE XI.

Colmer's Grave Stone, in Christ Church, Monmouthshire.

Measures seven feet three inches, by three feet four inches.

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PLATE XII.

Ruined Monastic Edifice in Cardiff.

An anonymous drawing of this building, in the author's possession, which appears from the inscription to have been taken on the second of september, 1795, exhibits a far more considerable range of ruin, than is now standing; and which, if correct, will prove that it must have been greatly dilapidated since that time. How far the drawing alluded to is to be relied upon, the author cannot presume to say, as it occurred to him by accident, with many similar articles, in a topographical *collectanea*. The circumstance however suggested the propriety of

taking a drawing of the remains as they stand at present.

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PLATE XIII.

Penline Castle.

As seen from the side of Penline hill.

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PLATE XIV.

Pillar, Hieroglyphic Tablet, and other British antiquities at Lantwit Major.

In this plate the principal object is the curious pillar mentioned in page 339, of which a transverse section is shewn on the ground close to the foot of it. The hieroglyphic, or rather genealogical tablet in the wall behind, as well as the mutilated figure of the Virgin Mary over it, is described in page 342. An arch is fancifully broken through this groupe of objects, to afford a distant view of the church of Lantwit Major.

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PLATE XV.

Ancient British Cross in the burying ground of Lantwit Major church.

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PLATE XVI.

Ancient British Monument at Lantwit Major.

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PLATE XVII.

Singular antique Monument in the old Church of Lantwit Major.

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PLATE

PLATE XVIII.

Effigies of Paganus de Turberville. Monument of Morice de Londres, and another, in Ewenny Priory.

The last-mentioned of these is noticed in page 396.

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PLATE XIX.

Examples of the superb ancient pavement in Ewenny Priory.

In this, as in the pavement of Neath abbey, an accurate idea of the general design can only be conceived, by uniting several of the tiles together; the union of four, at least, are requisite to form the larger circles, and quadrangular borders, which are so conspicuously elegant in the pattern of the whole pavement. The uppermost tile is red, which may not have been the original colour, as some of the red tiles appear blotched with blue, but it is still remarkable that the shield on this is of a deep purple. In some the purple prevails, but those which from their situation have been least exposed to the weather, are for the most part blue with yellow figures.

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PLATE XX.

Kenfig Castle, with a distant view of the Severn.

Refers to page 38 of the second volume.

To face the title page of vol. 2.

PLATE XXI.

Ancient British Crosses, at Court-y-Davydd.

This vignette describes the precise situation in which those two massive stones are laid, as a sort of rustic foot path

path bridge across the stream that flows by Court-y-Davydd house. A front view of both those crosses are to be seen below.

To face page 5. vol. 2.

PLATE XXII.

Ancient British Cross in Margam, and a Roman memorial, on the road side between Margam and Kenfig.

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PLATE XXIII.

Neath Abbey, with the adjacent smelting works.

The figures delineated in the foreground, represents the manner in which the coal is conveyed, with facility, from the pits to the smelting houses. The vehicles in which this fuel is carried, are called dram waggons. Four or five of these heavy machines, linked together, and filled with coal, are drawn with the greatest ease by means of a single horse upon the rail roads, constructed for the purpose, and only require the assistance of one man for their management.

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PLATE XXIV.

Fragment of the elegant Pavement, from Neath abbey, &c.

So very inconsiderable are the remains of the old pavement of Neath abbey at this period, that the specimens represented may be truly esteemed a novelty. Every fragment of it is carefully picked up when observed among the rubbish, by the indigent inhabitants, who dispose of them to advantage among those strangers who through motives of curiosity chance to visit this spot.

The

The drawing is taken from a number of pieces, which when laid together, shew the pattern to have been very curious. The tiles are square, about five inches and an half in breadth, an inch thick, and highly glazed on the upper surface. In the last particular they are exactly similar to those which lie in the floor of Ewenny priory, but are smaller, and of a pattern entirely different. As a contrast to this elaborately figured pavement, a portion of that discovered a few years ago in Margam abbey is represented in the lower part of the plate; the last of these pavements being as remarkable for its simplicity, as the other for the profusion of its embellishments.

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PLATE XXV.

Mumble Light House,

Seen through a singular, natural excavation, formed in one of the contiguous rocks, apparently by the violence of the sea; an opening of small dimensions, but admirably picturesque.

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Pennarth Castle, with part of the bay of Oxwich.

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Pont-ar-Dulas Bridge.

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PLATE

PLATE XXVIII.

Kidwelly Castle.

The principal front of this noble edifice;—a morning scene.

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PLATE XXIX.

Ty Gwyn, the farm of Sir Richard Steele, in the vale of Towey.

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PLATE XXX.

Vale of Towey as the prospect opens from Caermarthen on the eastward.

The conspicuous features of this scene are *Langunnor Hill*, *Allt Fyrthyn*, or Merlin's Hill, and the great hill *Allt Vawr*, the last of which shuts in the vista of the vale.

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PLATE XXXI.

Roman Altar in Caermarthen, and an ancient British Cross at Carew, Pembrokeshiere.

The Roman altar is of a small size, standing about two feet high, or rather less. This is represented in the fore ground of the plate; a sketch of the ancient cross at Carew, described in page 296, being placed beyond it.

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SKETCH

OF A

DESCRIPTIVE TOUR

THROUGH

MONMOUTHSHIRE, AND WALES, &c.

CHAP. I.

Excursion from London to Bristol.—Clifton, and its Environs: St. Vincent's Rocks: Natural products: Extraneous fossils, or Antediluvian bodies; Bristol diamonds; Plants, &c.—New Passage.—Severn.—Charston Rock.—Coast of Monmouthshire.—Retrospective glance at the Invasion of Siluria by Julius Frontinus; and its final subjugation.—Cursory remarks on the roman money, &c. occasionally discovered on this Coast; and on that supposed by some to appertain exclusively to the Cambrian Princes.

OUR first excursion through Monmouthshire and South Wales, commenced, as already intimated, from the adjacent coast of Gloucest-

 ershire,

ershire, in the summer of the year 1800; a season the most delightful for our purpose that could possibly be desired, or a sanguine expectation have anticipated. The calm and settled serenity of the weather, which uniformly attended us, except in the outset of our journey, was in every respect well calculated to exhibit Nature in all her charms: to display the enchanting scenery of the Principality, under the most lovely, pleasing, and engaging colours: to cheer the fatigue, and soothe the disappointments, sometimes: perhaps, invariably, incidental to travelling; and render our journey, what it should ever be to the tourist, under the circumstances we had undertaken it, a source of interest, amusement, and delight. Early in the month of July, I bade adieu, for a time, to London, in the company of a friend whose pursuits and views were fortunately congenial with my own; and from whose company, therefore, I promised to myself that real satisfaction, in which I was by no means disappointed: after accomplishing

complishing the first hundred miles of our journey, we spent a few days in Bath, and the environs of Bristol; and from thence proceeded, with all convenient expedition, upon our long intended ramble.

To digress on the trivial incidents of a journey between the metropolis and the Severn, is needless. Candour becomes the tourist, and I therefore trust it may be still further acknowledged with propriety, that previous to this, our first visit to the southern district of Cambria, we were too earnestly busied in anticipating the pleasure of our future perambulations, to bestow more than cursory attention upon the local beauties of the country, and other striking particulars, that arrest the remark of travellers in the intermediate route. At a later period these were not neglected; but still it is unnecessary to dilate on such a copious topic; however amusing, or replete with interest, few of these bear any immediate relation to the history of

the country we were hastening to explore. Let us, therefore, pass over this extensive tract in silence; make one short pause to pay our tribute of admiration to the rising grandeur of Bath, and beauty of its vicinity; speak slightly of Bristol, and thence proceed to the banks of the Severn, that noble stream which forms the great southern boundary between Wales and England.

Bristol, we are aware, has an important claim to our consideration in several respects before we enter the Cambrian principality; in a commercial view at least both its past and present history is in an eminent degree connected with that of Wales.

Authentic record, it may be recollected, speaks in language altogether doubtful of the early origin of Bristol. Some imagine it arose to the condition of a great trading town under the auspices of the Saxons, by whom it was originally named *Brightstow*. Whether

Whether of the West Saxons, who were possessed of Somersetshire; or those who afterwards established the Mercian kingdom, an extent of territory that included the whole of Gloucestershire within its confines, is uncertain; but at all events it is supposed to have been founded by the Saxons, who, after they had driven the Britons aeross the Severn, towards the close of the sixth century, were constrained to form a port upon the Avon, both for the advantage of their trade, and convenience of carrying on their cruel and destructive wars against their implacable enemies, the native princes of South Wales. If it has any claim to more remote antiquity, the page of history is silent, we believe, respecting it. Between Bath and the Severn sea, there were several stations established by the Romans; some of no mean importanee, and one especially supposed to have been at Bitton, a considerable port; but whether Bristol was of any note in those early ages, is perhaps for ever veiled in profound obscurity. Certain it is, the town of Bristol

was a place of great trade before the end of the eleventh century*; nor have we any reason to dispute its being since that time the great mart of traffic between the inhabitants in the adjacent parts of England, and their Cambrian neighbours.

In our days, the city of Bristol carries on a brisk and lucrative commerce with the inhabitants of South Wales. Nothing can indeed be more peculiarly advantageous for this purpose than the situation of the former upon the shores of the Avon, a fine navigable river, opening into the Severn at the distance of a few miles only to the south west of the city.

* *Brichstou* (Bristol) according to an ancient writer, was a town extremely convenient for trading with Ireland, and in those barbarous days was the chief mart for *slaves* collected from all parts of *England!* From the crimes and cruelties that blot the record of that gloomy age, the heart recoils, and the pen faulters in retracing them. Let us then revere the memory of the pious Wulfstan, who induced them to abandon this odious traffic, "which neither the love of God nor the King could prevail on them before to lay aside." *Vide Wulfstan Anglia Sacra*, &c. He was bishop of Worcester, and died in 1095.

By

By means of the Severn, and its tributary inlets, Wales is supplied from hence with a variety of articles of the more useful kinds in the domestic concerns of life: among which, those of grocery, iron wares, and linens, are not to be forgotten, with many others of a secondary value and consideration; and in its list of imports may be enumerated others of equal consequence, the spontaneous products, or manufacture of the Principality.

Bristol encourages the Cambrian fisheries on the Severn sea, by paying a handsome bounty upon all the fish brought for sale into their markets above the ordinary prices; part of this is destined for their home consumption, and the remainder is conveyed down the river to Bath, and other inland places. From the Welsh the inhabitants of Bristol purchase also a prodigious quantity of salt butter, eggs, poultry, &c. and sometimes cattle. Coals might be imported likewise at an easy price

from Wales, but of this useful article they have plenty in their own neighbourhood: the collieries of Kingswood are abundantly productive. The trading part of the community promotes in some measure the manufacture of Welsh flannels also, aids their tin and iron works, and transmits an immense quantity of copper ore in a crude state from the Cornish, and other mines, to be smelted in the copper works established along the sea coast of Glamorganshire. These, and many other advantages which both derive from their present intercourse, might be more fully stated were it requisite, but, upon the whole, it must appear already that Bristol is of as much, if not greater consequence to South Wales, than either Liverpool or Chester is to the northern districts of the Principality.

Of the city, and immediate environs of Bristol, we may be allowed to wave any minute detail: on a place of such importance, and public resort, it would be improper to enlarge; suffice

suffice it then to say, that in point of extent, wealth, and population, it stands the rival of almost every other city in the kingdom, and is perhaps in either respect inferior only to the metropolis itself. The commeree of this place extends to the remotest parts of the world, and nearly all the internal trade of the neighbouring country, not engrossed by Gloucester, is concentrated within its bosom. In ancient times the city stood in the county of Somerset: by a later extension of its buildings, to the opposite side of the river, it likewise occupied a part of Gloucestershire; and, lastly, by an act of the legislature, was allowed to constitute a county of itself. By virtue of this act it has two representatives to guard its privileges in the British Senate; it is also the see of a Bishop, one of those established by Henry the Eighth at the dissolution; and confers the dignity of earldom on the ancient family of Hervey. The late Earl was the Lord Bishop of Derry, at whose death, in August last, the title devolved to his only

son,

son, Lord Hervey. The public edifices in this city are numerous, among which are the old Cathedral; St. Mary's Redcliffe, a venerable pile of exquisite workmanship, founded by William Canning in the reign of Edward the Fourth; a handsome exchange, and various other public buildings, that deserve attention.

During our little stay in this neighbourhood, we neither neglected to inspect the most remarkable of these, nor the admirable scenery of its vicinity. The delightful village of Clifton especially excited the liveliest interest for the pervading neatness, or rather elegance of its buildings, and still more for the bold and airy situation which they occupy,—the broad undulated summit of a lofty eminence that immediately overlooks the Avon. The valley through which the river flows is of a stupendous depth, and very strongly indicates what is commonly accredited, that this awful

fissure

fissure was rent through the rocks in some great convulsion of nature.

To the stranger, in his walks along the banks of the Avon, either immediately below, or on the opposite shore, the appearance of that straggling portion of Clifton village, which stands in view, is altogether striking. Several of the houses are seated upon the higher summits of the rocks that overlook the valley; some even are seen starting in various places close to the precipitous verge of the craggy cliffs that soar to an awful height above the river; while others again, stand secluded in the bottom of the valley, close to the water. The intermingled grey, and ruddy tints of the naked precipices on which Clifton is situated, forms an admirable contrast to the finely wooded cliffs that uniformly rise to an equal height on the other side of the valley: and with the placid river below, the hot wells and adjacent buildings, contribute to enrich a mountainous landscape, of no great extent, but

but of considerable beauty, and highly romantic.

The springs of warm water, or as they are termed, the hot wells, for which this spot is celebrated, appear at the foot of the cliffs immediately on the bank of the river; and are commodiously secured within an appropriate suite of apartments erected for the reception of the company who resort hither in the warmer months of the summer, for the benefit of the waters. The particular virtues of the Clifton waters have engaged the pen of several physicians, eminent in their day; they are said to be highly beneficial in consumptive cases, either as a bath, or taken inwardly: and are reported from analysis to be lighter than rain water, inferior in heat to the hot springs of Bath, and to contain, in small proportions, Glauber's, Epsom, and marine salts, calcareous earth, fixed air, and selenites *.

* Munro, &c.

In our occasional rambles along the steep sides of St. Vincent's rocks, the conspicuous cliffs already mentioned, we were not unmindful of the great variety of natural objects, that steal upon the attention of the naturalist in this attractive spot.

Of extraneous fossils, such as shells, coralloids, &c. these rocks are not entirely unproductive. Fragments of various bodies of this sort; with some few perfect specimens, appeared imbeded in the grey limestone, which the labourers were quarrying about the cliffs, and burning below for use. Such as we observed were only those of the more common kinds: two or three different species of *Anomia*, and another bivalve of the *Pecten* * tribe, which we are told is sometimes found of a considerable size here.

* Ostrea of Linnæus, Peigne of Lamark: the latter, with much reason, referring the Linnæan Ostreæ of the pecten family to a distinct genus, because they have both valves equally convex, or nearly so, whereas in the common oyster, and the kinds analogous to it, the upper valve is always flat.

To the curious stranger, these organized remains of *antediluvian* bodies, as they are usually denominated, are by no means devoid of interest: they introduce to his consideration, an amusing and instructive series of reflections, upon the mutations and various catastrophes, to which all natural bodies have been exposed, through some mysterious cause, from an early period of time; they teach us to

"Look through Nature, up to Nature's God,"

and assist us to discover, so far as the limited powers of man will allow; or that it is incumbent for us to enquire, those ordinances of Divine Providence by which the earth is governed, and the universe upheld:—an important theme for our consideration it must be admitted, and alike deserving, if not commanding, the regard of the most casual observer, or the profound investigation of the consummate naturalist.

The shells alluded to are clearly of marine origin, or inhabitants at least of the waters; and

and being now found entombed in the solid stone, must necessarily excite astonishment in the minds of many. The most commonly received opinion is, that they have been deposited in such situations at the time of the universal deluge, when the very rocks were rent, convulsed, and softened, by the violence of the waters that overwhelmed them; and prepared to receive the spoils of the sea and land within their deepest recesses. The waters once more retiring, the rocks, it is supposed, became hard again, and assumed the general aspect under which they now appear.—Such is in part the theory of the learned Dr. Woodward.

But even in this transient view of the few inconsiderable extraneous fossils that occurred to observation in perambulating St. Vincent's rocks, the cursory reader should be apprised, that geologists entertain more than one opinion respecting the causes that have brought them hither.—These demand some little

notice before we quit such an interesting subject; and should they lead us to trespass too far on these discretionary powers, which the reader is ever disposed to allow the tourist in his occasional remarks, let the importance of the enquiry it involves be fairly considered, and it is presumed that alone will furnish some apology for the detail.

These shells, and other petrifactions, differ altogether from the creatures of the testaceous, and other tribes of animals that inhabit our seas, our lakes, our rivers, or the land, at this time; or that are certainly known in a living state in any part of the world. In this particular it should be further added, there is nothing singular: all the extraneous fossils found in any country, at least those imbeded in the secondary calcareous rocks, being of the like description; entirely different from those found living.—With respect to such especially as are discovered in a fossil state in Britain, notwithstanding that the apparent similarity

between

between them, and an inconsiderable number of exotic shells, (natives of the warmest climes) is sometimes striking, they are rarely, perhaps never, strictly speaking, of the same kinds. Thus far we perceive the line of discrimination between the recent and fossil bodies, are strongly traced by the hand of nature.

The latter circumstance implicates this curious matter of discussion in much greater obscurity than any other, since it is obviously uncertain whether the various creatures whose shells, and other exuviæ are now found in a state of petrifaction, ought to be considered as inhabitants exclusively of the vast depths of ocean; which in one solitary instance only, (the awful crisis of the deluge) were torn from their secret lurking places, and hurled into the mass of matter that hardened afterwards into stone, or not. This is a subject on which the philosophical conjectures of the naturalist have long been exercised, and doubtless not

entirely in vain. The enquiry resolves itself at the first view into two questions, namely: —are these relics the evidence of a race of beings now *extinct*, the wreck of an antediluvian world?—or, do the species yet *exist* beyond the reach of our researches in the unfathomable depth of waters? The affirmative of both opinions has been maintained: how far either is most compatible with the testimony of sacred writ, is immediately apparent.

A third suggestion seems to offer in the slightest survey of this intricate subject; might not the same effects have rather been produced by various causes, either not connected with the deluge, or only bearing a partial relation to it: such as the slow and more progressive formation of the different kinds of rocks in which these animal remains are found, before, and after, the universal flood. There are cogent reasons to be adduced in behalf of this conjecture. That the primitive mountains, consisting of granites,

porphyries,

porphyries, &c. which are considered coeval with the creation itself, contain no remains of organic bodies, is pretty clearly ascertained. Very few of these fossil shells again, are found in the calcareous beds that lie immediately upon these mountains; and those which are, belong to certain species that are rarely, if ever, met with in other rocks that are admitted to be of later origin. The secondary rocks of the calcareous kind, which are believed to have been formed by the decomposition and deposition of animal matter, during a vast space of time in which they were submersed in the sea, contain fossils, shells especially in great variety and abundance. The incumbent slate beds, argillaceous matter, and other substances of the same kind, abound occasionally also with the vestiges of marine bodies, fossilised.—As to those rocks, &c. that are beyond dispute of alluvial origin, it is easy to conceive they should be replete with organic matter; with the remains of shells, and other marine crea-

tures accumulated in the course of ages, at the bottom of that sea which overflowed them.

The appearance of these alluvial rocks so far above the present level of the sea, has been variously attributed to the decrease of the marine element, from divers causes in the course of the vast period of time that has elapsed since the creation: to its retreating from the face of the earth into the deep recesses occasioned by internal convulsions; or to volcanic eruptions that have raged at intervals within the earth, and operated to effect a change upon, and elevate certain portions of the surface.

But, with respect to the fossils which these rocks enclose, the greatest difficuly yet remains; to assign a satisfactory reason wherefore they are so dissimilar to the shells, &c. at present known to have existence: this we cannot presume to answer.—Some modern naturalists suspect that these fossils, may be, not merely

merely the remains of one, but of several creations, that have successively been swept away, or undergone a final dissolution, till replaced at length by that in which we now exist. With certain modifications of the same, or nearly the same hypothesis, others believe that the few relics of animated creatures deposited in the calcareous rocks, that rest immediately on the primitive kinds, are nothing more than the wreck of a race of beings, destroyed by some vast commotion in the world, prior to the deluge: that those in other secondary calcareous rocks were another race of beings, altogether different from the first, that were partially, if not entirely extirpated in after times: that other rocks again of a later origin contain the remains of those which have been destroyed at periods still subsequent to the former; and that those rocks which are of the most recent growth, or formation rather, contain the vestiges of such, of course as have suffered in the latest dissolutions.—Hence it is conceived they may be traced

progressively, according to the different kinds of rocks in which they are enclosed by the attentive mineralogist, who will be thus enabled, in some measure, to estimate the respective claim, that every different kind may have to a later origin, or more remote antiquity.

The *sulphate* of *Strontian* is also found here, ten or twelve feet below the surface of the earth with which the rocks are covered. This substance lies in detached nodules, usually of a roundish, flattened form: of a foot or more in diameter, and three or four inches in thickness: it is of a delicate cream colour; and exhibits when broken semi-transparent tabular crystals, of a blueish cast, that are for the most part confusedly aggregated in the mass.

Strontian is a pure, heavy, earth, forming an intermediate genus between the lime and baryt; this substance was first discovered in the state of

of *carbonate*, at Strontian in Scotland, from whence it received its name; and was for some time supposed to be peculiar to that place, till this species of it was discovered in the neighbourhood of Bristol. The celestine is likewise found here.

We selected about the cliffs one or two small specimens of that kind of quartz, which occurs in the crystallised form, in the cavernous interstices of the rocks; and for which indeed St. Vincent's cliffs were celebrated even in the days of Camden. The crystals alluded to, are those which have been ironically denominated the Bristol diamonds, for their superior transparency and lustre, which may emulate, though in a very remote degree, the brilliancy of that valuable gem. When these were more abundant, than at present, they were collected in great plenty for the use of the jewellers; those which are fine being sufficiently ornamental for little trinkets of inferior value. Such as we ob-

served were of the common figure, disclosing upon the surface of the clustered mass their hexhedral summits, with, or without the prism of six sides, and some few lying in an oblique position, exhibiting the hexhedral pyramid at both extremities. In point of size these crystals are variable, they are generally small and discoloured: those which are perfectly clear and brilliant, rare. Some are deeply tinged with red, arising from the oxyde of iron which pervades the crystals, others are only mottled with it, and are very pretty; occasionally they are neatly figured with the *spiculæ* of iron within. Some are large, and of a fine amethystine purple colour: again others are of an ochraceous hue; and they have been found of a deep black. All these crystals are constantly found attached to a kind of ferruginous petrosilex, iron ore intimately blended with unfigured quartz, or other substances very copiously impregnated with the oxyde of iron.

The iron-stone with which St. Vincent's rocks

rocks abound, is not, that we could learn, ever worked for the sake of the metal it contains: the indications are certainly favourable, in several masses of the rocks that had been recently broken, there appeared traces of a remarkably good ore.

To the botanist these rocks afford a better harvest.—Several curious, and rather local plants occur here: the *Bristol rock-cress* (arabis stricta) a delicate little species, bearing white blossoms on a single stem, is found in one spot, only a mile below the hot-wells, and is supposed to be peculiar to that place. *Cistus Helianthemum*, we noticed, flourishing luxuriantly on the calcareous cliffs: the two uncommon species of *Sedum*, *dasyphyllum*, and *rupestre*, grow likewise here, and in many places the crevices of the rocks are prettily decorated with a variety of plants, among which we recognize some few that are by no means frequent.

On

On the morning of our departure from Clifton, we ascended the loftiest summit of those rocks, to observe the rich variety of prospects which the spectator commands from this exalted situation: all are picturesque: all entitled to peculiar praise, but that extending to the north and westward we admired most. In this direction the eye glances over a delightful tract of the intermediate country, bordered by the channel, and bounded in the remoter distances by a vast sweep of that hilly land which forms the southern limits of Monmouthshire, and part of Wales; a scene collectively of equal interest, extent, and beauty. —But we were not long permitted to enjoy this delightful prospect to advantage: the clouds hung heavily upon the farthest of the Monmouth hills, whilst we caught a transient glimpse of all the beauties that were so widely displayed before us, and then descending in billowy foam upon the gleaming surface of the sea, shortly after spread still further, and

veiled

veiled at length the greater portion of the distant scenery from our sight.

Proceeding from Clifton across Durdham Down, we took the direct road from hence to the new passage, where we arrived in the afternoon.—Nothing intervened in this ride of ten or twelve miles to deserve particular remark, except the rich diversity of landscape in which Blaize castle is seen to the left of the turnpike road, in a most conspicuous point of view. This tasteful mansion, a modern building, proudly crests the summit of a lofty eminence that rises in the midst of thriving and luxuriant woods, and boasts assuredly one of the most delightful situations as a place of residence, imaginable. The face of the adjacent country, and for a few miles further, is extremely pleasing: in the vicinity of the little villages of Westbury and Henbury especially, the highly cultivated lands that arrested observation, seemed to bespeak at once the fertility of the soil, and genial influence

fluence of a vigorous and improving state of husbandry. Grazing, is likewise carried on to some extent about the marshes that lie contiguous to the Severn, where the numerous herds of black cattle find abundant pasturage, and make a truly respectable appearance.

The journey of this day commenced under the inauspicious aspect of a gloomy atmosphere, that had gradually overclouded every nearer feature of the scenery, while it almost concealed the distances in its murky embrace; and by the time we reached the new passage, the weather became still more unfavourable for our expedition across the Severn: the tide was nearly at the ebb, and the unruly waters dashing down the channel in opposition to a brisk north-western breeze, that set in stiffly upon the english shore. To encrease our disappointment, we were informed on our arrival, that the principal ferry boat had sailed for the opposite coast some little time before, and neither of those

of

of an inferior size, which on such occasions carry over strangers laid on this side of the river. Our expedition was thus delayed till the afternoon, when the wind, in a partial degree subsiding, the water became more tranquil, a boat from the opposite shore ventured to obey the signal that had been made, while we halted for some refreshments at the inn, and on its arrival we immediately embarked, and set sail for Monmouthshire.

In our walk across the low sandy shore between the inn and the landing place, many shells of the fossil *Anomia gryphus**, or as it is more frequently denominated, the *gryphites oyster*, appeared among the pebbles, and wreck of marine shells that bestrew this part of the coast in profusion. This may countenance the assertion of Mr. Strange†, who acquaints us, that immense layers of these

* *Gmelin.*

† *Archæologia*, vol. 6. These layers of fossil shells are said to extend from the eastern limits of Monmouthshire, across several of the english counties.

fossil

fossil shells lie imbedded in the gravel and lime-stone strata, along the lower part of Monmouthshire; from whence those individual specimens may have been washed out, and thrown up in violent storms upon this shore.

The breadth of the Severn across the new passage, is rather more than three miles at high water. Our boat was managed by one man only, who proved to be an alert and proficient sailor, but owing to the perverseness of the wind for our passage, we were nearly an hour endeavouring to gain the intended shore. —At this time also the haziness of the weather abridged materially the beauty of the views upon the river, which we have since seen to great advantage. That towards the westward commands a noble expanse of water, flowing with uncommon dignity and grandeur into the severn sea; and in the opposite direction, the eye pursues the vagarious windings of the river, as it bends its course between woods, and lawns, and verdant meadows, till it is lost upon the

the boundary of the remoter view.—A pleasing scene, immortalized by the pen of Milton:—

" There is a gentle nymph not far from hence,
" That with moist curb sways the smooth SEVERN
" stream,
" Sabrina is her name,———
* * * * * * *
Made goddess of this river; still she retains
Her maiden gentleness, and oft at eve
Visits the herds along the twilight meads,
Helping all urchin blasts, and ill-luck signs,
That the shrewd medling elfe delights to make,
Which she with precious vial'd liquor heal."

As we approached the coast of Monmouthshire, the boat-man passed, at our desire, close to the remarkable rocky islet which starts above the expansive surface of the Severn, a little to the eastward of the new passage;—the black, or Charston rock, as it is indiscriminately named by several writers. This is a rude mass of low craggy rocks, whose circumference is estimated at rather less than half a mile when the tide is down: at other times its size is inconsiderable. The whole mass consists of a very hard and durable kind of stone, that appears perfectly black at a distance,

distance, as we had before conceived from the familiar name assigned to it: on a near inspection the stone does not, however, prove to be absolutely black, but only of a dark grey, or dusky hue.

Whilst we were sailing round this little islet, in our first excursion, we observed several labourers employed upon it; some in hewing the stone into blocks of a convenient size, and others in shipping it off, for the purpose, as they informed us, of building the noble bridge across the river Usk, facing the town of Newport, which was completed about two years ago.

The request for this stone, as we have since learnt, was then very great; insomuch indeed, that in order to supply Messrs. Edwards, the architects, with it in sufficient quantity to perfect their design, the rock was inadvertently, or rather unavoidably, cut down in many places below the level of the sea at high

high water. The inference is natural; the craggy remnants of the rock are left in such a lamentable state of dilapidation, as to be apparently dangerous to mariners in the navigation of the Severn, or at least to those who are not perfectly well acquainted with its shores. In spring tides the apprehensions of danger are doubtless not imaginary, since, at those times, the whole islet, except one solitary pinnacle, lurks beneath the surface of the waves, and threatens the unwary mariner with destruction.

After this rock had suffered only a partial demolition, it was thought expedient by those conversant with nautical affairs, to erect a kind of obelisk upon the pinnacle alluded to, as a caution for strangers to sail at a convenient distance, and thereby avoid the chance of running their vessels aground upon it; but this was accidentally overthrown by the violence of a tempest that happened to rage with uncommon fury here, during the early part of

the summer of 1803, and considering its utility (if it be really so useful as we were led to conclude) it was a matter of concern, to see it lie in dismantled fragments upon the rock, the last time we had occasion to cross the ferry.

But to proceed.—Being still low water, we were constrained to land at the new passage, (in our first excursion) upon a shelving projection of dark, broken rocks, at some short distance from the commodious place of disembarkation to which the passage boats are brought up at high water: a slippery walk, in consequence, conducted us to the Black rock inn, which at other times may be in a material degree avoided. When ladies are of the party, the landing on this part of the coast of Monmouthshire about the time of low water, though by no means dangerous, is not altogether pleasant. The smooth-worn surface of the rocks, overspread with *conferva*, *fuci*, and various other marine plants, recently

cently moistened, and dripping with the tribute of the retiring waves, afford at best but an insecure and treacherous walk to the usual landing place; and requires at least some little circumspection to escape a fall at almost every step.

Much has been said of the romantic aspect of this coast, in approaching it immediately from the opposite level, pebbly shore of Gloucestershire: more indeed than it seemed to us entitled to. For my own part, I must confess I was rather struck with its singularity, than its grandeur; its simplicity, rather than its beauty; and in this respect, I found my fellow-traveller entirely coincided with me. The nearer rocks present an uniform mural range of cliffs to the further encroachments of the Severn; these are stained with the deepest red: with a variety of brown and ochraceous tints, disposed in horizontal streaks and layers, which at the first glance may not inaptly be compared to a lofty, ruinous, brick wall, skirt-

ing, at an appropriate distance, the boundary of the shore.

One of the most striking features in the scene before us, as we gain the coast, is the black rock inn, rearing its whitened front amidst the luxuriant verdure that bedecks the verge and summit of the ruddy cliff, contiguous to the ferry.—On a nearer view, the rocks that had attracted our remark upon this coast, appeared to consist chiefly of a coarse, heavy, arenaceous grit, retained in a calcareous cement, and deriving their varied hues form the greater or less proportion of iron, (in a state of oxyde) with which the other component materials are combined. Limestone, it need be scarcely added, is found in great abundance here.

Having quitted the passage boat, we rambled for the space of an hour or two, along the sea coast, before we resumed our route for Caerwent. It was our object in this walk, to collect some kind

kind of local information concerning this particular spot, which we are to recollect, has been variously spoken of by different writers. One inadvertence of remark at least we were thus enabled to correct.—Mr. Williams, the historian of Monmouthshire, acquaints us, that "the Charston rock, Black rock, and New passage, imply the same thing." Others say they are not the same, and we are persuaded the latter are in the right. The boatmen who navigate the Severn, distinguish the insulated mass of dusky stone, already mentioned, by the name of Charston rock: the black rock is the low craggy projection connected with the main land, where the Milford mail occasionally takes water, at those times when the wind is in a certain point unfavourable for the usual passage: the latter lies at some short distance to the eastward of a third mass of low shelving rocks below the common landing place, which is not unfrequently called the black rock likewise; and is further said to impose a name upon the inn

ashore, but this our informants pointed out by the name of St. Andrew's.

This, I am aware, may be thought of trifling moment to the tourist, or the reader; except so far as it relates to the particular conjectures of those, who have presumed to name precisely the spot on which the Romans landed when they invaded Monmouthshire.—Either the black rock, or Charston probably, (if it was then connected with the main land, as some imagine,) is commonly believed to have been the landing-place of that formidable force which repaired thither, under the command of *Julius Frontinus*, in the reign of Vespasian, in order to reduce that warlike nation the Silures to obedience, and ultimately proved successful.

Others, indeed, of equal respectability in point of information, with those who entertain the former opinion, think the place called Caldecot Pill, a mile and a half, or less than two

two miles to the westward of the black rock, rather, received the invaders on this memorable occasion, while others again appear convinced they made a partial disembarkation at Beachey, opposite the *old passage-house* at Aust.

To either of these opinions we may assent with safety; or, if more congenial with our own ideas, indulge in others equally rational, and perhaps equally unfounded; since the page of history is altogether silent respecting the point in question.—Thus far, we are assured undoubtedly by the roman authorities, that about the seventy-fifth year of the Christian æra, the above-mentioned distinguished commander, to whom the government of Britain had been assigned by the emperor, being anxious to improve upon the conquests of his predecessor, *Petilius Cerealis*, who had re-conquered the greater part of the revolted Britons, determined to reduce the *Silures* likewise, at that time one of the most powerful of the seventeen petty states into which pro-

vincial Britain was divided; and that with this view he arrived on the coast of Monmouthshire, with that irresistible detachment of the Roman army, which, after a severe struggle with the natives, put a final period to the independence of Siluria.—To this the historian Tacitus alludes in the following passage: "Et cùm Cerialis quidem alterius successoris curam famamque obruisset, sustinuit quoque molem Julius Frontinus vir magnus quantum licebat, validamque et pugnacem Silurum gentem armis subegit, super virtutem hostium locorum quoque difficulcates eluctatus*. *Taciti. Vita Agric.*

Notwithstanding the success that attended the exertions of Frontinus, the entire subju-

* Thus rendered into English by one of his translators. "The fame of Cerealis grew to a size that might discourage the ablest successor, and yet under that disadvantage Julius Frontinus undertook the command. His talents did not suffer by the comparison. He was a man truly great, and sure to signalize himself, whenever a fair opportunity called forth his abilities. He reduced to subjection the powerful and warlike state of the *Silures*, and, though in that expedition he had to cope not only with a fierce and obstinate enemy, but with the difficulties of a country almost impracticable, it was his glory that he surmounted every obstacle."

gation

gation of the Silures, in common with the other southern Britons, is attributed to Agricola; a man whose virtues, talents, and transcendant merits, both as a statesman and a warrior, are depicted in glowing colours by the pen of Tacitus, his biographer, and son-in-law. —Agricola was appointed governor of Britain by Domitian, in the year 78, and while he remained in this exalted station, fulfilled the duties it imposed upon him with the greatest credit. His policy, his moderation, and conciliating conduct, not less than the strength and terror of his arms, contributed to subdue the hardy race he was destined to contend with. Acquainted as he was, most intimately, with the national character of the Britons, instead of persisting, like his predecessors, to oppress them, it was his object, as our historian acquaints us, to correct the abuses that had crept into the administration of the Roman authorities in the country; abuses, which he well knew, had before occasioned the hostilities of the Britons, and might again

rouse

rouse them to resentment. He endeavoured to conciliate their attachment by humane and equitable measures; to soften their manners by inducing them to cultivate the arts of peace. A fierce, untutored people, running wild in woods, he was convinced, would ever be addicted to a life of warfare. To wean them from such habits, he held forth, as we are told, the temptations of pleasure, public games, and other amusements: exhorted the natives to build commodious dwelling-houses for their habitations; temples, and courts of justice; and diffused a becoming spirit of emulation among the higher classes of society to excel in learning and refinement; providing for the liberal education of the sons of the leading chieftains, and promoting the language, as well as dress of the Roman people among them.—The success of Agricola, as it is natural to conceive, in consequence of these consistent measures, was signal and complete. It ensured to imperious Rome, the undisturbed dominion of a province, of which their victories

tories alone might have obtained but an insecure possession for a time, and reconciled the submissive Britons to the government of a foreign power, and as it afterwards proved, to a life of mean and ignominious servitude.

So far as this relates to the *Silures*, or any other of the British states in those days, considered individually, no material blame can assuredly be imputed to them on this account. Nothing can be more obvious than that resistance further to the Romans at this period, on the part of the southern Britons, might have been ultimately fruitless. The die was cast on which their fate depended. Their jarring interests, feuds, and petty animosities had heretofore presented an insuperable barrier to that firm and cordial co-operation between the several states which was absolutely requisite to drive this formidable enemy from their country: they were now a conquered people, and incapable of such an effort.

To

To the high military character of Agricola, they were by no means strangers: they knew him to be an experienced general, mild in government, but to be justly dreaded had they determined on revolt. The forces under his command had spread ruin, death, and consternation through all the states that dared openly resist the authority of the ambitious Romans; and in point of discipline and numbers, the different Roman garrisons settled throughout this part of the country, were considered doubtlessly by Agricola, in every respect adequate to retain the dispirited natives in subjection; or he would not have ventured immediately to undertake his well-known expedition against the Caledonians, and other northern states of Britain.

"It was the subjugation of the Silures," says Tacitus, "a fierce and obstinate enemy, that gave the Romans quiet possession of South Britain."—An acknowledgement uninfluenced by prejudice, unbiassed by interest, that

that reflects immortal lustre on their memory: they were among the number of those distinguished Britons, who to the last asserted the liberties of their country, against the common enemy, the conquerors of the world.

From the commencement of the Roman war, we may evidently perceive, the Silures made a vigorous resistance to repel these haughty invaders. The cruel and disasterous contests which they sustained under their gallant leader Caractacus, was insufficient to damp that ardour, that brave and determined resolution, which inspired their bosoms, and breathed the genuine spirit of independence. One desperate conflict, after a war of several years, at length decided the fate of that heroic chieftain, who had so often led them on to glory, if not to victory: he was overthrown. Of the sequel of this event no one is ignorant, he was betrayed into the power of Claudius, by the treacherous Brigantine, queen Cartismunda, to whom he had unfortunately fled

fled for safety after the battle, and was conveyed in chains, a captive to the capitol; where the magnanimity of his deportment, and address, before the emperor, enforced one striking proof of Roman clemency, *forgiveness* for the high offence he had committed, in bravely defending his native soil against the hostile invaders of his rights;—for presuming to evince so long

———the unwearied valour, that durst cope
With *Roman* prowess, and well nigh prevailed."
S. Davies.

But the Silures, notwithstanding they were deprived of their prince: though unaided, and unprotected, by the neighbouring Britons, rallied their scattered forces, mustered all their strength, and maintained possession of their territory. Nor were they long inactive; they soon convinced the Romans, they were still in a condition to carry on the war with energy. The advantages acquired shortly after the dreadful contest that hurled Caractacus from the throne, by this intrepid people,

people, stand a proud and lasting memorial of their fame, even in the annals of their enemies; they were many, and for a time decisive. Fired with a generous ardour in their country's cause, they bore in mind the exhortation of their beloved chieftain, on the eve of that fatal contest which deprived them of his aid for ever. The chance of battle had declared against them on that memorable occasion, but they were now aroused to repair the evil. To preserve their integrity still as a people, free from the restraint of Roman bondage, and Roman tribute: to shield their wives and families from disgrace: to vindicate their honour: all they held dear, and sacred in society;—these were the motives that inspired them to deeds of glory; to those exertions of superior valour that ensured them victory! The lion becomes more fierce as dangers increase upon him, so the increase of dangers aroused the Silurians: their independance was at issue, and they fearlessly engaged the veteran legions of Ostorius in the storm

storm of battle to preserve it. They manfully opposed every difficulty, trampled on the glittering banners of their enemies; confronted, baffled, and defeated every exertion of the Roman general to reduce them; and proved themselves worthy of a better fate than ultimately closed this eventful struggle: worthy of that freedom, which, to the last extremity they had the resolution to defend.—Ostorius, himself, perceived at length that the Silurians were invincible to all his efforts, and was so affected with the serious disasters he had experienced in contending with them, that he died of grief.

Elated with their brilliant career of victory, we may readily conceive the Silures were among the foremost of the Britons to espouse the cause of the injured Boadicea, in their general revolt from the Roman power; but whether they participated in the resentment of that power, in common with the other Britons for the disgrace it had sustained, on the

the return of Cerealis, with a powerful army into Britain, is far from certain. They probably retired to their own territory, and were not disturbed till the arrival of Frontinus, who, it seems punished them effectually, by the establishment of a Roman military force in the very heart of their country.

This brings us to the period in which Agricola assumed the superior command in Britain. This skilful general was determined to rule with a strong hand as the immediate overthrow of the *Ordovices** for their temerity in cutting off a party of Roman horse that had been stationed to overawe them, not long before his arrival, proved sufficiently. He entered the country with an irresistible

* Wales, at the time of the Roman invasion, was divided into four distinct states, of which the *Ordovices* occupied the whole of that part at present denominated North Wales; with the exception of the extremity of land called the peak of Caernarvonshire, extending from Caernarvon westward, which was possessed by the *Cangiani*.—The *Silures* inhabited in South Wales the whole country, except the present counties of Pembroke, Cardigan, and the greater part of Carmarthenshire. The tract to the westward of the Loughor river, afterwards called West Wales, was then in the hands of Dimetæ.

force, and destroyed every thing before him with fire and sword; if, indeed, the testimony of the historians who relate the event can be accredited, he nearly extirpated the whole people. This striking instance of Roman vengeance: the conquest of Anglesea: the defeat of the Caledonians: and passive obedience of the other states of Britain; all which took place within the course of the three first years of Agricola's government, must have convinced the Silures how feeble and ineffectual would have been their endeavours at such a period to burst the shackles of their servitude: they fell under the yoke of the Roman power, but they fell with honour; and submitted only, when their only safety was in submission. "The Britons," Tacitus fairly tells us at that critical epoch of time, "are conquered, not broken hearted; reduced to obedience, not subdued to slavery."

Such are briefly the pervading features of those circumstances which led to the first estab-

establishment of the Roman power in the country of the Silures. By degrees the natives became entirely reconciled to the new form of government it introduced, and bowed obedience to its will; ever after remaining faithful to the Romans, till their soldiery were recalled from Britain, in the reign of the emperor Honorius.

To pursue the thread of history further on this occasion, would be foreign to our purpose: we must again advert to the new passage, and the event that led to this digression,—the invasion of Monmouthshire by Julius Frontinus.

Much stress has been laid upon the discovery of Roman coins about the Charston Rock, though not at present surrounded with water, in order to prove that he effected the landing of his forces there. It will certainly admit of some doubt, how far the casual discovery of a few Roman coins, in this, or any

other spot upon the coast, may serve to ascertain this curious point to the satisfaction of the more considerate, when we reflect that the whole country was under the controul of the Romans for three, or nearly four centuries after the event alluded to.

During that period we well know the Romans assumed the exclusive right of coining money for the use of their provincials; and that in consequence, any other was prohibited by their laws. Hence we perceive the cause of that abundance of Roman money of an early date, which has been found at different times in every part of the country, where they had fixed their stations; and with respect to that especially found on the rock of Charston, we may as readily believe it had been accidentally lost there at any later period, as at the time of the invasion. The Roman money, beyond dispute, was current in these parts till the departure of that people in the fifth century, perhaps much longer.

Neither

Neither of the kings who immediately succeeded the Romans, nor the native princes who governed afterwards in South Wales *, appear to

* It is a singular fact, and not unworthy of remark, that no coins of the Cambrian princes, either of South, or North Wales, have been hitherto discovered; a circumstance that affords much reason to believe they seldom, if ever, did coin money.—That they were content among themselves, to barter one commodity for another; and in their concerns with strangers, to employ the money they received from other powers in the course of traffic; or that which the Romans had left behind them, is one of the most plausible conjectures to which this circumstance has given birth.

When we hear of the coins of British princes, or rather kings, it alone implies those of an earlier date than the conquest of Britain by the Romans; and not such, as strictly speaking, deserve the title of Cambrian princes. Before the arrival of the Romans, the Britons were certainly possessed of coin, notwithstanding the report of Cæsar in this well known passage: "The Britons use copper or iron rings weighed by a certain standard for money." The coin possessed by them in those times, has been by some asserted to be Gallic, by others Phœnician, but they were after all very likely British; at least those which have the obverse convex, and the figure of the *Essedarius* guiding his chariot of war, &c. on the reverse, have been considered by the most experienced medalists, to be unquestionably British money, of that time. Cassibelaunus is thought to have struck some kind of coin, Cunobeline, the third in succession after him; and father of Togodumnus and Caractacus, lived in the time of Claudius: several of his coins are perfectly well known. Caractacus himself, perhaps had none; some of the Welsh, because they venerate his memory, say he had, but they are apt to confound CARAUSIUS, a native of Gaul, who came into Britain and assumed the title of emperor of the Romans, with CARACTACUS; and it is the coin of the former we have in several instances found treasured up among the natives, as a token of regard

to have availed themselves of their prerogative of coining; the money therefore of the former, might have continued here in use, for several centuries after it had been superseded by the Saxon coinage in other parts of Britain: probably even in some degree till the English coin was introduced among them by the

for this chieftain, whose memory they so much adore. Mark, Gratian, Constantine, &c. though chosen emperors in Britain, do not fall within the compass of these general observations; they perhaps had money similar to the other Roman governors, though Gratian was a Briton. But from the final departure of the Roman people, about the year 437, till the Britons were compelled by the Saxons to retire across the Severn, and confine themselves within the Cambrian territory, nothing certain is known respecting the money of the native princes who governed them; while those of the Saxons, on the other hand, who lived during the same time their nearest neighbours, are clearly ascertained.

The series of the Cambrian princes, of whom not an individual coin, or piece of money that ever I could learn, has been discovered also, commences from the time the Britons retired into Wales, about the year 575, and continued (though with various revolutions) till the reign of Edward the First; when Llywelyn, the last of the North Wallian line of princes, fell, and the whole country submitted to the English king, A. D. 1283.—Coins of the Mercian kings, whose dominions were separated from those of the Welsh by the celebrated dykes of Watt and Offa only, do sometimes occur, and are pretty well known.

As a sequel to these remarks, however, one circumstance must be considered, that seems to imply a positive contradiction to the opinion first advanced; viz. that the Cambrian princes seldom, if ever, coined money.

the Normans. Should this prove to be the truth, which there is much reason for believing, how many accidents might have concurred in the navigation of the Severn, during so many ages, to account for the appearance of a small quantity of the current coin of the country, upon an islet not half a mile from the shore; and that directly in the course of the common passage, in all probability, between this coast, and that of England? These might have been lost at various times in the Severn by the de-

money. In the ancient Welsh laws, revised by Howel Dha, or Howel the good, about the year 940, there is frequent mention made of money, and silver: of pounds (punt): pence (aryant): score of money, or silver (meaning pence): of a curtailed penny, and a lawful penny, &c. all which proves, beyond discussion, that they were possessed of money; but of what description this was, is altogether doubtful; whether it was the coin of their own princes, or that of the neighbouring states, cannot perhaps be ascertained at this time. The fines for different offences, we find, might be commuted, for a greater or smaller number of cows, &c. according to their stated value in money: which may serve to shew that money itself was scarce; and when we recollect, that it has been asserted by some of the best informed, that no coins whatever of the native princes of Wales have ever been brought to light, there can still be very little impropriety in adhering to the first opinion, till this extraordinary circumstance be more fully investigated.—Gold is spoken of, among the fines in this ancient code of laws, but not as being the current coin: this valuable metal was not coined into money in England, we are to remember, till the year 1344.

struction of vessels, and washed up here by the motion of the waves: they might have been concealed here for the sake of safety in times of trouble: or by pirates, by whom the coast was anciently infested; or, even have been left here by Roman labourers employed in the quarry, of which there is a strong presumption.—At all events, we are not absolutely to infer, that the Roman money found on Charston rock, or any other spot upon this coast, must have been dropped at the time of disembarking the force in question: or in its actual march along the shore when landed; although the possibility of such an accidental circumstance, or even design of the Romans to perpetuate by that means the remembrance of the invasion, should be implicitly allowed.

Last summer, a few days only previous to our arrival in this part of Monmouthshire, I was told several brass instruments, with some Roman coins, had been picked up among the low

low, craggy, rocks below the inn. From the description, the former were most likely Roman instruments of surgery, and objects, doubtless, of some curiosity. These, which we learnt had been immediately disposed of to a pedlar, for their value in old brass, were most probably condemned to the crucible; the fate that commonly attends such relics of antiquity. Regretting the loss of these, my informant assured me, that the boatmen often find such things, and coins especially, in the sands and crevices of the rocks, on many parts of the coast.

CHAP. II.

Road from the New Passage.—Caldecot Castle.—Course of the Roman Causeway.—Caerwent: its Ruins, and other Antiquities;—Dawle-gwad-gwyr-marw, a medicinal Plant, &c.—Penhow Castle.—Christ Church.—Deviation to Caerleon.

LEAVING the black rock inn, our route conducted us, through a fine open country of singular beauty; ascending gradually for miles into hills and gentle eminencies on the right; and sloping into a most extensive sweep of low, but fertile land, to the broad bosom of the Severn on the left.

When the weather is serene, the traveller surveys, as he proceeds along this road, the rich and varied scenery of Monmouthshire to great advantage, from several elevated

vated points of view, over which the road has been constructed. The landscapes to the southward are in particular beautiful, combining, in various instances, a wide extent of the Severn sea, rolling its translucent waters between the verdant limits of the nearer coast, and the pale hills of Somerset, that rest upon the verge of the distant horizon.

Caldecot castle, a grand and spacious edifice of high antiquity, occurs to arrest the observation of the passing stranger about two miles beyond the new passage; appearing, at no great distance across the meadows that lie to the left of the Newport road. The shattered remnants of this curious example of early military architecture, is still so far considerable, as to be much more interesting than we could possibly have been at first aware; and amply repaid the trouble of a visit we bestowed upon it, in our return through Monmouthshire, by the way of Caldecot village. In the distance truly, it does not fail to impress the mind with

some

some idea of its ancient splendour, for it assumes an aspect of no common dignity: a friendly mantling of luxuriant ivy, improves, in an eminent degree, the picturesque effect of its venerable mouldering turrets; and upon the whole, the ruin altogether would appear unquestionably to great advantage, were it fortunately for the admirers of artless beauty, stationed in a more conspicuous situation; like the greater number of edifices of a similar nature in other parts of the country.

Contenting ourselves for the present with the transitory glimpse of Caldecot castle, that intervened in our ride along the road, we soon after passed through the pretty village of Crick; a place commodiously situated near the junction of the four roads that lead to Portescuit, Shire Newton, St. Pierre, and Caerwent. Of the latter of these roads, I had almost forgotten to observe, that according to the best authorities, it pursues the precise course of the great Roman causeway, the *Via Julia*,

Julia, which that cautious people had formed with incredible labour, in order to preserve a regular communication with the different stations, and chain of camps, they established, or projected to establish, along the southern coast of Wales. In confirmation of this opinion, many hewn stones, and traces of the solid masonry of the foundation of the causeway, may be yet perceived in various places, by the attentive traveller.

After traversing the road for another mile beyond Crick, we came to the foot of the gradual ascent, upon which the poor remains of Caerwent, the *Venta Silurum* of the ancients, stand.

This place, which like Caerleon, flourished under the auspices of the Romans, was once a proud and important city: the great rival of Caerleon; or perhaps as Richard of Cirencester has suggested, at one epoch of time, even, the capital of the Silurian province.—

But

But alas! such is the mutability of all human grandeur; such the inefficiency of all distinction founded alone on ancient greatness, the glory of Caerwent has passed away, in the bold and impressive diction of the poet,

"like the baseless fabric of a vision;"

this pride of cities is no more: an humble village now occupies its scite, and mocks its memory, while it assumes the name of—*Caerwent!*

Memorials of its former consequence have yet survived the ravages of ages; they yet exist in the early record of the historian; and in the more faithful vestiges of its ruins, that have long been known, or that are still discovered daily.—Huge fragments of its massive walls, of fallen columns, capitals and shafts of admired workmanship, tessellated pavements of singular beauty, and coins in amazing numbers; all which, in the lapse of former ages, had been levelled with the dust, and are now occasionally discovered within its precincts,

upon

upon the removal of a few feet of earth, which has so long concealed them.

To enter deeply into the history of ancient Caerwent, would prove a task of more than common difficulty. Early writers afford no very satisfactory, or very copious information concerning it; and much, of course, must therefore rest upon conjecture; or upon the inferences to be drawn from the relics of its ancient state, that accidentally obtrude themselves to notice. Still we might not easily excuse our want of curiosity, in passing slightly over this classic ground, without, at least adducing a few remarks, that naturally occurred to mind, in the course of several visits to this attractive place.

Caerwent, or Caergwent (the city of Gwentland) as it is not unfrequently written in the last and preceding century, is believed by many, to occupy the exact spot on which the chief city of the Silures, or British capital,

was

was situated, before the invasion of Monmouthshire by the victorious Roman force, mentioned in the former chapter. There is not certainly, in the acknowledgement of those who entertain this opinion, the slightest trace of any British encampment, at this time to be discovered, but although there may not, that circumstance can in no manner disprove the fact, since every trace of it might have been levelled, or otherwise destroyed, by the Romans, before they began to erect the fortifications whose remains we see at this period.

Under the dominion of the Romans, Caerwent received the name of *Venta Silurum*; and arose, we may presume, to an eminent degree of prosperity. The scite of the old Roman city, occupies the higher ground of a very gradual acclivity: surrounded in part by walls; or traces of masonry, the foundations of those which have fallen to decay; and appear altogether, to enclose an area of about a mile

mile in circumference*. The outline of its external figure is nearly square, with the corners rounded; and the great Roman high way already spoken of, which passes through it from east to west, divides it into two parts, of which that on the north side is allowed to be rather larger than the other.

The size and form of ancient Caerwent may hence be pretty clearly ascertained. From the remaining fragments of the walls some near conclusion may be also made of the manner in which the place was originally defended: of the buildings that formerly stood within the walls, the ruins, accidentally discovered at intervals, are assuredly too obscure to authorise the most remote conjecture. Caerwent,

* This estimate, it should be remarked, is taken only in a general manner: had I been aware of the disagreement among writers, who profess to have surveyed it by actual measurement, we should have endeavoured to ascertain its dimensions with precision. Mr. Williams states it at 450 yards along the north and south side, and 350 on the two others: Mr. Coxe increases these to 505 yards by 350, and the usual fidelity of the latter gentleman, on other occasions, should rather incline us to admit his statement, in the present instance, than that of the former writer.—In a recent tour by Mr. Barber, we are informed, its width is equal to *two-ninths* of its length!

in its present state, requires a few words only to delineate: the area is disposed into fields and orchards, and includes a single church and parsonage-house, with an inconsiderable number of small farms and cottages.

Such is precisely the condition of modern Caerwent, and such nearly has been its state for the two preceding centuries, if we can rely on the evidence of Leland, who passed through this country in the reign of Henry the Eighth. "Yt was," says that writer in the language of his days, "sum time a fair and large cyte. The places where the iiii gates was, yet appere, and the most part of the wal yet standeth, but al to minischyd, and torne. In the lower part of the walle toward a little valey standeth yet the ruin of a ....* stronge. Within and abowt the waulle be a xvi or xvii smaul houses for husbondmen

* This blank was never filled up in the original M. S. and neither *Stow*, nor either of his later annotators, have supplied the deficiency. We may believe he intended to speak of the half bastions in the south wall, or perhaps of the tower of Caerwent Castle, in a valley at some distance from the wall.

of

of a new making, and a Paroche Chirch of S. *Stephyn.* In the town yet appear paviments of old streates, and yn digging they finde foundations of great brykes, *Tessallata-pavimenta, et numismata argentea simul et ærea.*" *Itin. v. 5. f. 5.*

Leland attributes the decay of Caerwent to the increasing consequence and superior advantages of Chepstow, as a port in former times. " A great likelihod ys," says this writer, " that when *Cairguent* began to decay, then began Chepstow to florisch, for it standeth far better as upon *Wy*, there ebbyng and flowing by the rage cumming out of Severn. So that to Chepstowe may come greate shyppes."

Those who venture to form conjectures relative to the æra of the walls that surround this place, from the style of architecture they exhibit, are by no means agreed in their decisions; some assigning them to the Romans,

and others to the Saxons. Mr. Williams, in his history of Monmouthshire, observes, "the best judges of ancient buildings, among which is Mr. Strange, pronounce the walls to be generally Roman, the *southern* part of them only being Saxon, interspersed with Roman bricks*." The passage, or the work to which this author alludes, wherein the sentiments of Mr. Strange are thus expressed, are no where mentioned, and may prove hereafter to be an inadvertent misstatement on the part of Mr. Williams. Such an error might certainly have originated in the hasty perusal of the paper communicated by Mr. Strange to the antiquary society on this very subject; but in which he takes up precisely the contrary side of the question. It is a series of remarks, on a cursory dissertation, previously written and inserted in the transactions of that society† by another member, the Rev. Mr. Harris, of Caireu.—The latter

* Hist. Monmouthshire, p. 36.

† Archæologia, Vol. v. p. 56.

had

had said the walls were Saxon, interspersed with Roman bricks, especially on the south side, and Mr. Strange, on the other hand, endeavours to prove them all to be Roman: his remarks on the south wall are decisively to that effect. He observes that the better half of the bastions project from the outside of the wall, as *Vitruvius* recommends, and as is commonly observed in Roman walls, in which they are introduced. The bastions, he adds still further, appear of the same date and structure with the wall itself; they are built with the same stone, and those used in the facings of both, are of the same dimensions, corresponding with the more perfect fragments that are observable on the western side.

One might almost imagine there must be some fatality to err, in speaking of the ruinous old walls of Caerwent, when we consider the various misstatements they have given rise to. It is not a little singular, that Llwyd should

have asserted there were no remains of these walls except on the *south side*, and Strange informs us, "the most considerable remnant he had seen in his tour, is that on the west." The truth is obvious, both are still in tolerable preservation, and I think it might with propriety be added, that they are more perfect, and more considerable, than the remains of any other similar Roman structure, either in Monmouthshire, or the Principality.

This is admitting them, unequivocally, to be the vestiges of Roman labour; but should they really prove to be of Saxon origin, which, upon the whole, does not seem plausible, it would detract materially from the celebrity attached to them. In the opinion of some, the angular bastions, we know, are deemed a proof of their being Saxon: others think the walls were built under the lower empire, because the Romans did not use turrets, or flankers, like these, before that æra; and finally, to reconcile the apparent difficulties that arise in this respect,

respect, it has been suggested by others, that the turrets might have been added since the construction of the original fortifications.

Both the south and western walls extend a considerable way, as before remarked: of their height, however, no accurate idea can be now attained, the upper part being much dilapidated, and thickly overhung with trees and shrubs, that vegetate luxuriantly amidst the mouldering ruins. They may present, at this time, in the loftiest places, an elevation of about twenty feet, and be from ten to twelve feet in thickness. The three remarkable bastions are disposed near each other, towards the western extremity of the south wall; and each displays five facets of an octangular tower.

In the course of a subsequent saunter among its ruins, we descended from the fields within the area through the bushes that skirt the southern wall, to examine its

construction with more attention than we had been at first inclined to appropriate to it: our labour was not lost; several broken parts of the wall, we found, afforded sufficient evidence of the peculiar kind of masonry employed in its erection. In one spot especially, where a considerable portion of the original facing had accidentally fallen down, this was disclosed most completely. The rubble stones were disposed in layers, that formed a sort of *zic zac*, not unlike that very ancient mode of building in use among the Britons, which the antiquaries of our days denominate the *herring-bone* style; after the stones were thus duly placed, the mortar, an intermixture of lime, sea sand, &c. was poured over it in a state of fluidity, which immediately pervaded and filled up all the interstices, and drying, formed a most compact and durable mass; after this, the facings of squared stones completed the building. Except on the south side, the walls were further strengthened by a wide

wide and deep moat, the vestiges of which are not even at this day obliterated.

The field below the southern wall, or rather adjoining to it, we observed in passing onward, to be abundantly bestrewed with those fragments of half-smelted iron ore, which are known among the inhabitants of this place by the name of Roman cinders. These, when found in plenty in any particular situation, convenient for the purpose of the Roman smelters, are believed, and perhaps not without sufficient reason, to indicate the scite of some one of their ancient bloomeries; a conjecture, it will be highly pardonable to indulge, in the present case at least, when we consider the relative position of the field in which they lie, to an ancient station possessed undoubtedly by the Romans. The ore itself was not probably found near the spot, but the mineral riches of the county is well known to consist chiefly in coal and iron; and the latter might be therefore brought at a comparatively

ratively small expence from the mines, only a few miles distant, in order to be smelted at the Roman works established on this spot.—The appearance of these cinders, as they are termed, replete with a large proportion of very excellent metal, naturally excites a question in the mind of the observer, whether these were in reality the refuse of the Roman smelting works in the time alluded to, or not: if they were not designed to undergo any further process, with the view of extracting the ore they still contained, it testifies beyond a doubt, that to whatever degree of eminence, and skill, the Romans had arrived in other arts, that of smelting still remained in a state of infancy.

That the Romans were ignorant of the prodigious powers of the blast furnace, has been asserted, and in a certain degree assented to. The stupendous machinery now attached to it, are clearly the improvements of latter days. That people, it appears, so far as we

can

can learn, merely laid the ore, and wood with which it was intended to be fused, in alternate layers; and setting fire to the pile, were content to collect together so much of the metal as ran freely from the ore, by this weak power of ignition; disregarding the remainder as of no utility. The quantity of metal thus left in the *scoria* was considerable; and hence it happens, that when these cinders can be obtained in plenty, in the neighbourhood of a modern smelting house, they are again submitted to the fiery ordeal, and never fail to be productive of an ample profit.

Some short time before we paid our farewell visit to the interesting village of Caerwent, I must confess my curiosity had been much awakened by the following extraordinary detail of a vegetable, numbered among the native products of the place, by a brother tourist (Mr. Manby); and which it is but candid to remark, we discovered, afterwards, to be one, that had entirely escaped the notice

notice both of myself, and friend, in every former journey. "Near the walls" (of Caerwent) says this writer, "I observed a curious *shrub* to vegetate, resembling the elder both in appearance and smell; but on close investigation, found it materially to deviate, not only by a fibred stem, but a much longer and narrower leaf." This gentleman further learned that it is called by the Welsh, Dawle-gwad-gwyr-marw, which implies its *growing from human blood*, and that "it has the reputation of being found only in places formerly the scenes of dreadful contests; it dies with the stalk, and rises fresh every spring, yielding an abundance of juice, which is deemed excellent for swellings, or bruises, and particularly in diseases peculiar to the female breast."—In our walk, therefore, round the outskirts of the wall, I did not forget to enquire of honest *Chapman*, the publican of the village, who accompanied us, concerning this useful plant. There was no difficulty in perceiving instantly, by his countenance, that he was well acquainted

quainted with it, by the name above-mentioned; he even intimated some surprise, that we had not ourselves observed it before: —"It not only grows here," said mine host, "but also at Caerleon, and among the ruins of Ragland castle." So saying, he desired us to follow him, and directly conducting us to a field without the western wall, pointed it out to us, thriving in considerable plenty, and luxuriance.

The beneficial properties that are ascribed by the natives to this plant are not exaggerated: more might certainly be added, for it proved to be no other than the Dane-wort, or Dwarf elder, *Sambucus Ebulus* * of botanists,

* Sambucus Ebulus: cymis tripartitis, stipulis foliaceis, caule herbaceo. *Curt. Flor. Lond.*—*Gmel.*——Sambucus Ebulus cymis tripartitis, stipulis foliaceis,—perennis. *Smith Flor. Brit.*—S. humilis, seu Ebulus, *Raii. Syn.* 461.

To those unskilled in the pleasing science of botany, it may not be altogether amiss to say, that this is rather an uncommon plant, flourishing in profusion wherever its creeping roots have once secured an eligible place for growth, but still appearing local. From the common elder (*Sambucus niger*) it differs very materially, in having the terminal cymes

tanists, a species whose medicinal virtues are highly spoken of by the ancients, and which still retains a place in our *Materia Medica.*

The number of Roman coins that have been collected at various periods, about this place, is truly astonishing: our own researches were indeed peculiarly unsuccessful, for we were only able to procure a few *.

Last

cymes of three instead of five branches, and in bearing flowers of a deep red colour: the stem is herbaceous and furrowed: leaves pinnated, long, serrated, and of a dark green colour. The height is usually about three feet.

Dioscorides speaks of its virtues in certain cases, observing that it may be used with success in burnings, scaldings, and the bite of mad dogs. Gerard says, "its roots boiled in wine, and drunken, are good against the dropsy."—"The leaves do consume and waste away hard swellings if applied pultis-wise; or in fomentation, or both." Yet upon the whole, notwithstanding such favourable commendations in its behalf from early writers, we suspect it may be unsafe to recommend it without much precaution. Mr. Curtis acquaints us, that though the bark be strongest, and the leaves the weakest, all are too churlish medicines for general use: and furthermore, according to Dr. Brocklesby, Dr. Woodville, and other eminent men, its operation is so violent and precarious, that it is now rarely used.

* These were,—one of small silver, as above-mentioned, having on the obverse the head with a radiated crown: legend IMP. C. POSTUMUS. P. A. AUG. reverse, a galley: legend VICTORIA, exergue obscure.—Another coin in large brass of Maximus; on the obverse, a plain head, legend

Last summer, our attentive guide, already mentioned, conducted us, before we left the village,

legend MAXIMUS CAES. GERM. reverse, sacrificial utensils, legend PIETAS AUG. exergue. S. C.——A third, of small brass: on the obverse, head with a radiated crown, legend IMP. C. ALLECTUS. P. AUG. reverse, a galley, legend VIRTUS AUG.—A fourth very small, one of the CONSTANTINE's;—and a fifth of the same size, much mutilated, supposed to be of DOMITIAN.

The whole of these had been discovered by different persons, in various places within the area which the walls enclose, a few days only before our arrival. The ready sale which the people of Caerwent constantly find among their summer visitors for whatever coins they accidentally meet with about this spot, renders it a matter of mere uncertainty, whether the tourist, whose peculiar taste may lead him to enquire after such, can, at any time, be able to procure a number of them. Neither of those above mentioned are very common; that of ALLECTUS is rare:—Allectus was the confidential minister of CARAUSIUS the Gaul, who, in defiance of Dioclesian, assumed the title of emperor in the province of Britain; and afterwards murdering his master, declared himself successor, about the year 294.

It appears that Mr. Manby, who has recently published his tour through Monmouthshire, &c. was infinitely more successful in his researches after the Roman coins, occasionally found at Caerwent, than we were. He furnishes an extensive list of those which he obtained here, the detail of which is certainly amusing, and not uninteresting. It is only to be regretted, that from the difficulty of decyphering and pointing the abbreviated legends on ancient coins, he seems in some few instances to have been led into conclusions either very doubtful, or entirely erroneous.

One coin he describes "with a double face, without any legend. Reverse not distinguishable, but ROMA to be observed;" and this he presumes to be one of Cunobeline's, or Kymbeline; conceiving that the word ROMA alluded to the residence of that king in Rome, where he lived

in

village, to the farm of the Rev. Mr. Williams, the minister of Caerwent Church, on the

in great favour with *Augustus Cæsar*.—That coins of early british kings, and princes, are the source of much dispute among the learned, cannot be unknown; and a coin of Cunobeline's answering to the above description, might tend, in some small degree, to elucidate this subject further.—But, we suspect the conjecture of Mr. Manby may be not well founded, and that the coin in question should be considered rather as one belonging to the old republic of Rome, from the double face and legend which it bears; or again, it may be a family coin of Fonteia, whose general obverse is likewise the *Janus-head*, the reverses various, but inscribed with the word ROMA.

The piece, figured by Camden, and copied by later writers, which appears to have misled our author, appertains indeed, it is commonly admitted to Cunobeline, and bears the double face, but this has CUNO on the obverse; and CAMU, not ROMA on the reverse.—Coins of Cunobeline, we must add, are better known than those of any other British king of those early times; and not one of these, so far as we can learn, bear the word Roma.

It is scarcely within our province; nor can we feel it a task in any manner pleasant, to comment on the well meant endeavours of other writers; and shall conclude by observing only to those who may consult the interesting list of Roman coins which this gentleman describes, in order to make further enquiries respecting such at Caerwent that, his IMP. CALLECTUS, should be certainly read IMP. C ALLECTUS.....VALLICINLICINIUS—VAL. LICIN. LICINIUS.....HONORUS.—HONORIUS..... SEVERINR.—SEVERINA, &c.....In conclusion, it may be remarked, that it has been asserted, on good authority, that no roman coins of any value ever were discovered at Caerwent*; an assertion, which, if correct before, the copious list alluded to, will now sufficiently discountenance: several of those Mr. Manby mentions are uncommon.

* Vide Archæologia, Vol. II. Observations by the Rev. William Harris.

assurance

assurance of a neighbour, that one of Mr. Williams's servants, had, but a few days before, discovered several Roman coins in ploughing. This intelligence did not turn out to be absolutely true, for he had found only one; a Postumus in small silver, which we easily obtained. But the circumstances that attended our enquiry were rather fortunate: it introduced us to the polite attention of the master, who gave us a most cordial welcome, and with that sincere, and unaffected willingness which imposed upon us a still greater obligation, communicated every information in his power, that we thought requisite to ask, concerning, the antiquities of the place.

This gentleman shewed us one spot in his own grounds near the house, where there yet lies concealed beneath a superficial crust of earth, one of those indubitable remains of Roman art, a tesselated pavement. Part of a cart house, and other needful appendages

of his farm standing precisely upon the spot, has hitherto prevented him from clearing the ground. At a future period he has the removal of these in contemplation, and, thus proposes to rescue from oblivion, what there is reason for supposing to be (from the portion of it that has been seen already) a pavement of equal, or of superior magnificence, to any that has yet been brought to light in Caerwent.

Mr. Williams is led to think the pavement he has discovered, formed originally a portion of some very majestic edifice of Roman workmanship; most likely of a temple, because he has detected likewise, at the distance of a few yards only from the same spot, the mutilated remains of a noble capital, and shaft of a pillar, with various other indications that may well entitle the plausible suggestion he has formed, to implicit confidence.—The portion of the pillar shaft, a massive fragment, ornamented in a peculiar manner with foliations,

foliations, (or with, perhaps, the blades of spears, or javelins,) is at present placed in an erect position, with other stones of similar dimensions, and serves to support a *wheat-stack*. The application of such curious fragments of ancient art as these, to the more useful purposes of modern life, is but too frequently, and with reason too, the theme of deep regret with the inquisitive traveller, or the learned antiquary; but for once we may perceive, there are occasions in which every desirable purpose may be accomplished, without the least disturbance to the feelings of either: thus, although the station to which we find this broken pillar now consigned, be evidently derogatory to the first intention of the sculptor, or the architect, the perfect œconomy of Mr. Williams has rendered it of some small utility, in assisting to raise his crops above the reach of the host of little plunderers, which the cautious farmer has to guard against; and at the same time it is left always free to the inspection of the curious stranger, whose

steps may by chance direct him to the parsonage-house.

A final visit to the shattered remnants of the two admirable tesselated pavements, for which Caerwent was but a short time since so highly celebrated, closed our last researches after the mouldering relics which yet bespeak the pristine glory of this place. Both of these lie in the orchard of Mr. Lewis, and thither, with the leave of the occupier, which it is always necessary to obtain, of course, we accordingly repaired.

Passing through the orchard, we soon perceived that the first of these pavements, having lain exposed in the open ground, was nearly all demolished; part of the broad external border, and some portion of the inner quadrangle, alone remaining.—But indifferent as this appeared, that, which only a few years since, drew forth the commendations of genuine taste, and was deservedly the admiration

tion of every traveller, proved to be, if possible, in a far worse state of mutilation. Of this, very little indeed remains, except a number of the dies, or *tesseræ*, of various colours, loosened from the cement, and scattered promiscuously among the grass, and nettles, about the interior of the building which was once intended for its protection.

Upon the first discovery of this interesting *antique*, a convenient building, correspondent to its size, which was about twenty-two feet, by eighteen, was erected over it: the pavement serving for the floor of the apartment. Thus, was it for a time preserved with becoming vigilance, from accidental, or from wanton mischief; and thus it might have long remained in that high state of preservation in which it was at first discovered; but unfortunately, the respect the owner entertained for his pavement in the earliest instance, suffered a very sensible diminution afterwards; and having at length occasion to

build a brew-house, he literally unroofed the edifice that contained it, for the sake of the materials, in order to save expence in his new erection. The pavement thus exposed, defied for a time, all the inclemencies of the seasons, till the *tesseræ* becoming loosened by degrees, through the severity of the frosts, and filtering of the rains, from the bed of cement in which they were retained, most of them have been since taken up, and carried away, by thoughtless strangers to gratify an idle, and unmeaning curiosity.

The roofless enclosure, (for the walls are still standing,) is now applied to various purposes; last summer it contained a store of apples, very carefully treasured up in a litter of straw. Part of the latter we were allowed to remove, and perceived beneath it, one small portion of the scroll work of the pavement to be yet legible, and worth preserving: at our request the shutter of the window was unfastened from its useless situation, and duly deposited

deposited upon this *morceau*; at the same time that a promise was exacted from the farmer's son, who usually attends on strangers, that it should be removed occasionally for their gratification only; and I may hope the admonition of a small gratuity with which the promise was enforced, may not prove ineffectual for the preservation of this trifling moiety, its last remains.

The *tesseræ* of which this pavement was composed, are all small dies, about half an inch square; with the exception of those which constitute the outer border, for these are rather larger. The natural hues of these dies could never have been so remarkably vivid in colour as they have been usually described, unless they were coated with some kind of glaze, or peculiar composition, not perceptible at this time. Those called the blue and yellow, prove to be either common lime-stone, or a fine well baked clay, for samples of both kinds occur of the latter colour: all the blue

ones are uniformly alike, consisting of a grey, or blueish lime-stone, apparently the common *lias*, or, as it is vulgarly called, the *lion* of the country. A few dies of a yellowish colour, we perceived to be an opaque quartz; others that are perfectly white, a hard calcareous cement; and the red a fine brick, similar to the ordinary sort o. pottery in use among the Romans.

From the imperfect state of this curious pavement at this time, it is utterly impossible to conceive the beauty of it when complete, or even to define any of the designs into which the dies were formerly disposed. Some few tourists have been more fortunate in this respect than ourselves; no one certainly more so than Mr. Wyndham, who saw it in his route through Caerwent, in the year 1777, the precise period in which it was first discovered. His description is peculiarly elegant, and being no doubt correct, we cannot refrain repeating it in the words of the author.

" The

"The pavement," says Mr. Wyndham, "is in length twenty-one feet six inches, and in breadth eighteen feet. A border, edged with the Greek scroll and fret, surrounds the whole, but on the north side this border being upwards of three feet, is much broader than on the other side. This was designed in order to reduce the circles within a square. These circles are about three feet in diameter, and are encircled with a variety of elegant ornaments, and separated from each other by regular and equal distances. I think there are thirteen of these circles. The pieces of which the pavement is composed, are nearly square, the breadth of them being about the size of a narrow die. These are of various colours, blue, white, yellow, and red; the first and second are of stone, and the yellow and red are terra cotta. By a judicious mixture of these colours, the whole pattern is as strongly described as it would be in oil colours. The original level is perfectly preserved, and the whole composition is so elegant and well executed,

cuted, that I think it is not surpassed by any mosaic pavement that has been discovered on this, or even on the other side of the Alps. In my opinion, it is equal to those beautiful pavements which are preserved in the palace of the king of Naples at Portice. I am strongly inclined to think, it is of the same age with Agricola."—"It might possibly have been the floor of a temple, as we may reasonably consider it too costly an ornament for a private building."

The remarkable uneven surface of the grounds in which the sorry vestiges of these pavements lie, has been a matter of much curious speculation heretofore, and ought not in justice to pass unnoticed. In our mind, and in the mind of those, who, from their local knowledge of the spot, are much better informed than we can be, the unequal swells, and falls, which this uneven surface of the earth presents, are but so many certain indications of the heaps of ruins, the wreck of ancient

ancient edifices that remain concealed beneath it. It is asserted, and in confidence too, that another tesselated pavement has long been known to exist, in the highest degree of preservation, in an obscure part of the orchard, but, for prudential reasons this is not allowed to be uncovered: the advantageous produce of two or three excellent *apple trees*, that thrive luxuriantly in the soil which covers it, being more truly grateful to the owner, than all the empty commendations of the intrusive virtuoso.—Here we must pause; the late proprietor, Mr. Lewis, of St. Pierre, is no more; his successor may be actuated by other motives, and endeavour to retrieve some few of those remains at least, from their present state of obscurity.

Several years ago, another handsome tesselated pavement was discovered, in a spot, at a short distance from this orchard, that is well remembered by the natives of the place; on this, we are told, there were many emblematic figures,

figures, relative to hunting, such as hounds, bows and arrows, and the like; from whence it was vaguely conjectured to have been the floor of a temple, dedicated to Diana, by the Romans. The scite of this, is at present occupied by a large barn, which was pointed out to us, as we passed along the road; but the pavement itself has been long since destroyed.

Thus concluded our afternoon's perambulation, the last time we inspected Caerwent. In this particular instance, it became a serious object with us to reach Caerleon pretty early in the evening, in order to secure accommodations for the night; we therefore left this village, which had afforded us much amusement, with regret, after dispatching a late, but comfortable dinner, that had been provided for us at the inn; and pursued our further route along the Newport road towards the place of destination.

After

After crossing the inconsiderable rivulet of Nedern, that flows on the western side of Caerwent, the road conducted us through a tract of country extremely fertile, and not less pleasingly diversified; though, at intervals too much confined to allow us any very extensive views of the distant scenery. Gentle eminencies approach on either side to intercept the prospect. Reaching the picturesque remnant of Penhow Castle, the verdant hills adjacent, appear to rise still higher, from their contiguous approach, and seem to enclose us in the deep recess of a considerable valley.

Penhow Castle is boldly stationed upon the broad brow of a commanding eminence that rises steeply from the vale, on the south side of the road; a spot precisely marked by the situation of the little inn, called the rock and fountain, which stands at a short distance from it, on the opposite side of the road. Perhaps it may be requisite to be thus minute, in describing the position of this edifice, however

ever conspicuous to the view of every traveller on the road, having more than once ourselves passed by it, without observing it to be an object of any curiosity. We conceived it might be the house of some reputable farmer who had whimsically chosen this lofty elevation to exhibit it to more advantage, at the same time that he might command the beauties of the surrounding country. This misconception might easily arise, the aged remnants of its once formidable battlements having been so completely metamorphosed by the latter improvements it has undergone, to render it the peaceful, and convenient mansion of the tenant, that it scarcely now retains the least appearance of a fortress.

Contemptible, however, as Penhow Castle may now appear, considered in the light of a military edifice, it was anciently one of no mean importance:—the castellated residence of the noble family of the Seymours. This castle is named with that of *Undy*, a spot in the great

great level of Caldecot, about five miles to the southward, among the conquests obtained, or recovered rather, from the Welsh, by that family, with the assistance of Gilbert Marshall, earl of Pembroke, in the year 1240; we say recovered, because some believe it to have been built originally by an earl of Clare, with the design of curbing the rebellious spirit of the natives, upon his conquest of this part of Monmouthshire. In 1270, Sir William Seymour resided here.—Before the reign of Henry the Eighth, Penhow, we find on record, devolved to the family of the Bowles's. By purchase it came to the Lewis's in 1694, and in 1714, being seized for debts due to the crown, the castle, lordship, and estate were sold to Edward Lloyd, of Bristol, in whose family it is said to remain at the present time *.

The history of this place did not greatly interest us, nor did the edifice itself seem altogether likely to repay our curiosity, for

* Vide Coxe, Monmouthshire.

the

the trouble of ascending the hill on whose summit it is stationed. A square tower, with an apparently semicircular fragment of an old embattled wall, together with the recent buildings attached to them, are visible from different points of view below; the northern front has a neat appearance, and consists of a dwelling house of three stories.

Contiguous to this, and in the same lofty situation, stands the plain, rural-looking church of Penhow: this, with a few trees, and other chaste embellishments, form a very pleasing groupe of objects in the back ground beyond the castle.

Within some short distance of the Newport road, as we had been before apprized, there are two or three other castellated ruins of inferior consequence, like the former; these, on further enquiry, we learned to be, Pencoed, about half a mile to the westward; Lanvair, a mile and a half to the northward; and Striguil,

Striguil, at least three miles further, across Wentwood, in the same northerly direction.

Nothing can be conceived more pleasant than the ride along the direct road between Penhow and Newport, in fine weather. Shortly after passing the former, it becomes throughout enlivened by frequent bursts of landscape, of an amazing extent and beauty. The whole embraces one wide sweep of inland country, broken into gentle inequalities, extremely fertile, and smiling in all the pride of culture. Of the romantic, also, it is not deficient; the inequalities sometimes swell to hills, and sometimes sink to vallies; towards the northward also, the range of hills that intersect the lower part of Monmouthshire, aspire to a prodigious height; and abruptly terminate the extensive inland view. With the capricious features of the pointed Skyrrid in the distance, the nearer Penca-mawr, Twyn Barlaam, and other lofty mountains soaring proudly above the inferior elevations, the scenery to the north-

ward assumes a character truly alpine, wild, and gloomy.—Delicacy and effect pervade the intermediate region, and the still softer aspect of the southward. The great level of Caldecot, prettily dotted with a few neatly whitened cottages, and two or three rural churches, are comprised in the nearer view. Beyond these are seen the Bristol channel, bending its silvery course along the whole of the southern boundary of the coast, and the hills of Somerset receding in the palest hues of blue and purple, to a remote extent of horizon, completes the picture in the happiest manner.

The level of Caldecot, from the lowness of its situation, and close approach to the sea, is constantly exposed in very high floods, to the calamities incidental, to at least, a partial inundation, notwithstanding all the precautions that have been taken to prevent it. Walls have been constructed to oppose its encroachments, and drains formed to receive the superabundant waters on ordinary occasions;

sions; the whole tract, which extends for many miles along the coast, appears by this means to have been brought into a tolerable state of cultivation.

Of the more useful mineral products of the tract over which we now proceeded, we accidentally obtained some little information. A vein of coal is thought to extend in a somewhat oblique direction across this part of the country, intersecting the main road between the New passage and Caerwent, and thence continuing in a direct line towards the mouth of the Usk river, some miles below Newport. This may prove to be a portion of that vein which was traced about two centuries ago, along the south coast of Wales, from Pembroke, to the forest of Dean; running parallel with the limestone nearly the whole way *. Between the New passage and Caerwent, a colliery

* This vein of coal is mentioned in a curious Manuscript History of Pembroke, written by G. Owen, Esq. in the year 1603; now preserved in the British Museum. *Harleian MSS. No.* 6824.

would be productive of great advantage to the inhabitants of the vicinity; the price of coals being considerable there. The nearest vein that is worked to this spot lies in the hilly parts of Monmouthshire, or the forest of Dean, in Gloucestershire

The spirit of adventure along this tract, appears to have been diminished by repeated disappointments. Coal has been sought for, and been discovered near the lime-stone, but only hitherto in very slender veins, and the produce of course was insufficient to defray the common charge of working them. Pits, I am credibly informed, have been sunk in several places here, to the depth of many hundred feet, with no better success.

There are three distinct turnings on the right of the Newport road that lead to Caerleon; the farthest of these, called the old road, is sufficiently distinguished from the others, by the lofty elevation of Christ Church,

an

an edifice that stands immediately upon the pinnacle of the hill, along which the road descends circuitously towards the town.

This eminence commands one of the most lovely scenes imagination can depicture, upon the right; an extensive prospect over the fertile bottom in which Caerleon lies. But by the time we reached the spot most eligible for contemplating its varied beauties to advantage, they were obscured in the dusky embrace of evening. The sun had retired behind the mountains: the last emanations of its ruddy light were seen wavering, transient, mingling faintly in the western sky with the sober tints of twilight. Even the gleaming undulations of the Usk, in the verdant bottom through which it flows, was scarcely visible.—Pursuing a miserable road, which the descent from Christ Church now presented, we shortly found that it conducted us down the sides of a pretty steep hill: and it was not till after a tedious walk, tired as we were, that we perceived

ourselves to be near the straggling outskirts of a village, which, on enquiry, proved to be that of *Ultra Pontem.*

Passing hastily through this village, a street of small, but decent looking houses, brought us to the bridge of Caerleon; at the foot of which, after crossing the river, we found the inn. The evening was far spent when we arrived here, for it is at least a mile from Christ Church down to the town, and that, as before observed, to weary travellers, none of the most agreeable: but the comfortable accommodation, and civilities which the *Hanbury Arms* afforded us, at the conclusion of our day's excursion, made due amends for its fatigue; and induced us, by choice, to consider this as our head quarters, whilst we spent a day or two in the neighbourhood.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Caerleon.—Inspection of the principal Ruins still extant.—Supposed Roman Tower,—City Walls,—Scite of an Amphitheatre, and Tradition concerning it.—Concise View of the History of the Place; and of its present State.—Relics of Roman Antiquities, Sculpture, &c.—Salmon of the Usk, Skerlings, &c.—Accidental Walk to Christ Church, on the Eve of Trinity Thursday Festival;—curious old Tomb-Stone in the Chancel,—and Confirmation of the superstitious Ceremony annually paid to it, by afflicted Devotees.—Route continued from thence to Newport

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Both Athens, Theabes, and Carthage too,
We hold of great renown;
What then, I pray you, shall we do,
To poor CAERLEON towne.

Let Caerleon have his right,
And joye his wonted fame:—

CHURCHYARD.

PUNCTUAL to his appointment, our *Ciceroni* for the day, (the parish clerk of

St. Cadoc's) was in waiting for us, as the clock struck seven, on the morning after our arrival at Caerleon; and when we had finished breakfast, accompanied us for several hours in our walks about the town, as well as afterwards, in taking a pretty extensive circuit through its vicinity.

This afterwards proved to be a most interesting ramble, replete with amusement, and not entirely devoid of information.—A digression from the direct route between the New passage, and the town of Newport, in order to bestow a visit on this place, had been more than once in contemplation, as we passed along the lower part of Monmouthshire; and at length, during this excursion last summer, we had found leisure to accomplish it.

Pursuant to this intention, we had rested for one night, at the New passage-house on the English side of the Severn: from whence we took the advantage of a favourable wind and tide,

tide, to cross the river early on the following morning, and arrived by a very remote track across the country, at the village of Caerwent, in the afternoon. It should be further understood, that we had previously determined in our journey thither, after taking some refreshments at the Black Rock inn, to strike out of the usual road to Newport, and pursue some other route; both for the sake of novelty, and also that we might be thus enabled to devote as much of our attention as convenient, to the various native products of the intervening sweep of country, we were to pass over, in our way to Caerleon: a tract, I had been inclined to think, more likely to reward the observation of the naturalist, than we afterwards found it.—Fatigued and disappointed as we therefore were, with our devious pedestrian expedition over hills, and dales, and rocks, and sea coast, in the course of this pursuit, it must be candidly confessed, that we approached Caerleon, with no very chearful flow

of

of spirits; and to say the truth, we passed into the town without encouraging for a moment those reflections, which a place of such celebrity, "in the days of other times," is so eminently calculated to inspire.—But we had no such unpleasant considerations on our minds in the morning: sleep, "the balmy renovator" of health and vigour, had operated with its usual influence; and rendered us, in a word, alive to every emotion, the perishing memorials of the once flourishing condition of Caerleon would allow us to indulge, without incurring, or at least deserving, the imputation of "antiquarian quixotism."

A fleeting shower beating pretty smartly on us, at the time we left the *Hanbury Arms*, was but a trifling obstacle to the walk we had proposed; we instantly placed ourselves under the escort of Jones, the clerk already mentioned, and in defiance of the rain, proceeded onwards.

Turning

Turning to the westward along the bank of the Usk, towards what is termed the old quay, we were first desired to observe a large, and tolerably perfect remain of a tower, which from its ponderous style, and circular structure, appears coeval with the earliest buildings about Caerleon. This is commonly believed to be of Roman origin; a conjecture apparently confirmed by the bold and rounded arch of the door-way, and still more, by the composition, and durability of the mortar, with which the stones of the building are cemented. The window is square and modern, the tower having been fitted up as a place of residence; and a board suspended on the side, at present notifies to the passing stranger, that this once threatening bulwark of an important fortress, is now converted to the more humble purpose of a village post office.

This tower, together with the remains of two other bastions, connected by an intervening piece of wall, lower down the quay, are

are presumed to be a portion of the ancient outworks of Caerleon castle. Not that it is to be imagined, that the castle standing in latter days, was exclusively of Roman workmanship, but only of Roman origin; and that the Saxons, or the Normans, incorporated part of the old Roman works, among which were these, with their own fortifications, when they re-edified the castle and its outworks.

That there was a castle in this place before the Norman conquest, is well known; and furthermore, it is not less certain, that it must have undergone many considerable repairs after they had possessed themselves of it. The lofty mount on which the keep was originally stationed, still remains: it stands at the south east angle of the city walls, from whence the works of the fortress are thought to have been continued in an oblique westerly direction, till they verged upon the rocks close to the edge of the river.—There is

is reason to believe, that the tower, whose remains were standing on this mount, till within the last few years, formed a part of the original Roman edifice: some, indeed, think this was erected by the Saxons, and others are disposed to assign it to the Norman æra. It was, we may conceive, a stupendous building; the very same, most likely, which Giraldus speaks of, "*turrim giganteam**;" and which the muse of Churchyard celebrates in terms less classic:——

But chiefly for to note:
There is a castle very old,
That may not be forgot.

It stands upon a forced hill
Not farre from flowing flood:
Where loe ye view long vales at will
Envyron'd all with wood.

On the opposite bank of the Usk, near the foot of the bridge, and just at the extremity of *Ultra Pontem* village, stands another tower

* Giraldus mentions it as a gigantic tower, in the year 1188; Leland, in 1538, speaks only of the ruins of the castle; Churchyard describes it as being almost down, in 1587; but it is certain that part of it was standing on the mount, till within the last few years.

of

of a circular form; in a very much dilapidated state. This is certainly the remnant of some kind of fortification, designed originally for the defence of the passage across the river, and is believed to be of Roman workmanship, as well as those already mentioned on the northern side of the water. Upon a near view, this tower proves to be of small dimensions, and has the walls pierced with several narrow, window-like apertures, that are arched above; but for what precise purpose such openings were constructed in this building, is not clearly known.

Pursuing our walk from hence, we shortly arrived at the western side of the quadrangular space of ground, enclosed by the ancient Roman walls; within which the city of Caerleon was originally stationed. The remains of these walls, and other traces of the fortifications, are still so far considerable, as to mark correctly the extent of ground they were designed to circumscribe; but the suburbs

suburbs of the place extended, as it appears unquestionably, to an amazing distance beyond these walls, especially to the westward. The size of the enclosure, formerly within the walls, we ascertained in part, by the remnants of the Roman masonry, of which the walls were composed, and depression of the moat by which it was surrounded; and with the assistance of Mr. Coxe's very accurate ground plan, and the local knowledge of our conductor, with some little difficulty we were enabled to form a pretty correct conclusion as to the course of the remainder. The whole appears to be nearly square, having all the sides perfectly straight, except that on the south, in which a very slight curvature is observable. Each of the corners are rather rounded, and disposed obliquely to the four cardinal points of the compass; the extent of ground enclosed by them, Mr. Coxe has estimated at 1800 yards in circumference.

That portion of the wall which separates the

the lawn in front of Miss Morgan's house, (the metamorphosed Cistercian abbey) from the round table field; together with a part of the western extremity of the southern wall, is by far the most perfect of any now remaining; being still several feet in height, and retaining the original facings. Like most other Roman works of a similar kind, these walls are composed of rude pieces of stone, or rubble, cemented firmly together with a sort of mortar of singular hardness; a compound of sand, of pebbles, and pounded brick being intermixed with the lime. Of the facings, except about this spot, there are not scarcely the least remains; for these consisting of stones regularly squared, and suitable for many useful purposes, have been carried away at different times, for the erection of the houses, about, or within the town. What yet remain of these walls, bear an incontestible evidence of their prodigious strength and solidity when complete: they are at least three yards and a half in thickness, and many of the stones which compose

pose the facings, are of a considerable size. The walls at present, in the loftiest part, are not indeed more than twelve or fifteen feet in height, and can barely assist conjecture in presuming to define the precise elevation of this extensive work, when perfect. Trees and herbage of various kinds are confusedly entangled amidst its ruins, and in the dismantled state which it exhibits, produces an agreeable effect.

After inspecting the ruins of the wall in the *round-table* field, we turned a few steps aside to examine the singular excavation from whence the field derives its name. This is a shallow, oval cavity, or depression, whose greatest length measures about two hundred and twenty feet, the breadth one hundred and ninety, and the depth sixteen. It takes a gradual slope from the brink of its circumference towards the center, and is in no other respect distinguished from the field in which it lies, both being alike overgrown with grass.

The origin of this spacious excavation, has excited more than one opinion among the best informed. History is silent; tradition says too much. In recurring to the latter, while we pause to survey this spot, the sportive fancy, unrestrained by authority, and priding in her own delusions, would fain arouse the slumbering spirits of romance:— would con jure us the shades of an immortal Arthur, and his splend'd train of heroes, to revel in the place once celebrated for their presence;

——"In Arthur's time a table round
Was there whereat he sate:
As yet a plot of goodly ground
Sets forth that rare estate."

This, says the current tradition of the place, has been the scene of several memorable events. Here the renowned king Arthur instituted "*the noble order of the knights of the round table,*" for the avowed purpose of promoting social harmony among his nobles, of whatever rank they might be, free from restraint, and regardless of those petty distinctions

tions of superior birth, of wealth, or prowess, which had heretofore disturbed the cordiality of their meetings. In this spot the first meeting of the knights, we are told, was certainly convened, and celebrated with the utmost festivity and splendour; such indeed, as to excite the emulation of succeeding ages, when the spirit of chivalry was exalted to its highest pitch throughout Europe.—And here, may I be allowed to add it, we were assured with the utmost gravity, that in some evil hour of *enchantment*, Arthur, and two thousand of his valiant knights, sunk into the abyss of the earth, in the midst of one of these jovial feastings. But though this event proved fatal to his noble companions, the sequel of the tale acquaints us, the career of Arthur did not terminate thus ingloriously: his good friends the *fairies*, interposed at the critical moment of the disaster, and snatching him from destruction, conveyed him to *fairy-land* unhurt!

In this tradition, absurd as it is, we may perceive with what a degree of obstinate tenacity the welsh (for such we should consider the inhabitants of Monmouthshire) retain their ancient superstitions; both with respect to the actual being of these little invisible agents, the fairies, and the prophetic rhapsodies of their bards. The belief in both is as firmly accredited at this day, among the lower orders throughout Wales, as in the darkest ages. —The fable itself, which is commonly believed by them at this time, has an indubitable claim to remote antiquity; being, no doubt, a relic of the idle notions prevalent among the Britons of the sixth and seventh century, who consoled themselves under the cruel afflictions they sustained in their wars with the Scots, the Danes, and Saxons, in the persuasion that Arthur was still living under the protection of the fairies, and would certainly return again to the earth: lead them to great and decisive victories over their enemies; and then reign sole monarch of all Britain, as the prophecies

phecies predicted. So firmly were they persuaded in these silly ideas, that it would have been deemed little short of impiety, it seems, to dispute the veracity of them in those days. Nor were they less strenuously believed by the Britons who had migrated to Bretagne, than by those who remained in this country: all anticipated that period as the fulfilment of their happiness, and a re-union as one people under the same powerful potentate. To this belief in Arthur's immortality, the following lines bear testimony:

"He is a king crowned in Faerie
With scepter and sword, and his regality
Shall resort our Lord and Sovereigne
Out of Faerie and reigne in Brittaine.
* * * * * *
* * * * * *
By prophecy Merlin set the date."

DANIEL LYDGATE.

But enough.—We must dismiss the tradition, and the evidence of the poet together. Although there is no record now extant, sufficiently precise to determine the purpose for

which this excavation was designed, there is no reason to dispute, its being nothing more than the vestige of an amphitheatre, as the majority of travellers who have examined it, were disposed to think before us. Those who have attentively considered the remains of ancient buildings of this description, constructed by the Roman in other countries, will be immediately struck with this conception.

I have somewhere read, and Mr. Coxe confirms the remembrance of it, that this was formerly, and is still believed by some to have been an amphitheatre of the campestrian kind; such as were merely hollowed in the ground for the exhibition of common sports, and had the declivities furnished with seats of turf for the convenience of the spectators. This cannot be easily controverted: its present aspect may seem to justify such an opinion at the first glance; but we are to remember, that it has withstood already the obliterating hand of time, for the space of at least the fourteen

fourteen preceding centuries, and still its scite is very distinctly marked.—I should, indeed, suspect, considering this, and other circumstances, that in point of magnitude it certainly was once far more considerable than it now appears to be: nor have I the slightest doubt in my own mind, that this excavation marks the spot precisely, on which one of those magnificent theatres stood in ancient times, to which Giraldus alludes in the following passage: "*et loca theatralia muris egregiis partim adhuc ambitum omnia clausa.*"—Here our author expressly informs us, the Romans had built theatres at Caerleon, that were enclosed with stately walls, and which were in part remaining in his time, towards the close of the twelfth century; and this being the only memorial of the kind at this day visible in the neighbourhood, we may presume, with a certain degree of confidence to believe, this must have been the scite of one of those which he describes. In further confirmation of this suggestion, a spot was pointed out to us, on

one of the sloping sides of the cavity, where, in digging a few years ago, some stones, supposed to have been part of the seats of the ancient fabric, were discovered. A passage in the *secret memoirs* of Monmouthshire has been also quoted by Coxe, wherein it is asserted, that in the year 1706, a figure of Diana, with her tresses and crescent, moulded in alabaster, was found near a prodigious foundation of free-stone, on the south side of king Arthur's round table, which was very wide, and supposed to be one side of a Roman amphitheatre."

The remnants of the ruined Roman walls, some few traces of the moat by which they were surrounded, the shattered fragments of a castle, and scite of this amphitheatre, are what remains to prove the importance of this once celebrated place: it retains few other, and no prouder vestiges to commemorate its ancient dignity.—Thus fades the glory of Caerleon, once the pride, the admiration of southern

southern Britain: a place, which under the dominion of the Romans, and for several ages after, maintained the first distinction among the cities of our country!

Upon the splendour of "Arthur's princely seate," we need not insist, in order to prove its consequence. Admitting the existence of the British hero, which has been so obstinately contested; and all the embellishments the city might receive, after the final departure of the Romans from this country; when, we are told, it became the seat of empire, and residence of the British kings, its chief importance was still most certainly derived from its having been in earlier times a station of the Romans. The magnificent remains of former grandeur which Giraldus saw, and so emphatically describes in the twelfth century, were indisputably the works of Roman labour; or imitations of the arts which that polished people had introduced among the untutored Britons.

Britons *. The poor and mutilated fragments of ancient edifices, pillars, sculpture, altars, pavements, monuments, and coins, that are discovered here at intervals; nay, even the very bricks, and other building materials,

* "Dicitur Caerleon urbs legionum, *Caer* enim Britannicè *urbs* vel *castrum* dicitur." &c.—which may be submitted to the English reader in the following words.—"It is called Caerleon, the city of Legions, for Caer, in the British, signifies a city or castle. It was usual for the legions sent by the Romans into the island to winter there, and hence it is called the city of legions. This was indeed an ancient and authentic city, and was formerly well built by the Romans with brick walls. Here may still be seen many vestiges of its former splendour; immense palaces, which formerly emulated the grandeur of Rome with their gilded roofs †, for it was originally built by Roman princes, and adorned with sumptuous edifices; a gigantic tower; remarkable hot-baths; ruins of temples and theatres, all enclosed with stately walls, which are partly yet remaining. There are found every where, as well within as without the walls, subterraneous buildings, aqueducts, and vaulted passages, and what among other things I think remarkable, stoves may every where be seen made with such wonderful art, that they diffuse the heat at all sides through narrow and secret pores." *Girald. Itin. Camb. lib.* 1. *cap.* 5.

† These were most likely covered with a sort of highly glazed tile, of a rich golden yellow colour, somewhat similar to those in use at this day in China, for the decoration of the principal public buildings. Sir G. Staunton speaks of various edifices in the city of Pekin, belonging to the emperor's palace, the roofs of which are thus adorned with varnished tiles, and under the influence of a brilliant sun, have all the resplendence of burnished gold.—One might almost indulge a rational suspicion, that the Romans borrowed the hint of thus improving the magnificent appearance of their buildings from the Asiatics; there is reason to suspect, at least, that it is a very ancient custom among the Chinese.

which

which still bestrew the soil in profusion, bear their stamp, or prove some other incontestible claim to this very origin.

Whether, before the arrival of the Romans, a British city of any note, stood upon the spot which Caerleon now occupies, is apparently doubtful. The evidences on which this can be alone decided are unsatisfactory and discordant, and conjectures ought not to be advanced without due deliberation.—By some it is thought to have arisen on the scite of ancient Caer-Llion, or Caer-Wysg, mentioned in an old Chronicle of Wales, as a city founded by Beli, king of the isle of Britain, after his return from Rome, about four hundred years before the birth of Christ. There are not wanting others, who affect to trace the ancient city to an earlier date than this; believing it to have been founded by Llion, a British king, who reigned long before that time, and admitting only that the city was improved,

improved, and the fortifications re-edified, by Beli.

That a town of this name was built by one of the native kings, near the banks of the Usk, appears very certain, on the credit of the chronicle above alluded to*; and it is surely hazardous in admitting one part of its testimony, to reject the remainder. If we allow, in consequence of its assertion, for example, that a town was extant here, under

* Brut Breninod ynys Prydain.—"And then Beli returned to the isle of Britain; and through peace and tranquillity he completed the days of his life, and governed the country. And he repaired the fortresses that had decayed; and built other new ones; and in those times, amongst others of his acts, he built a fortress on the Wysc, near the sea of Havren (Severn) which was called, through a length of time, Caer-Wysch, and that was the archbishop house of Dyved; and after the coming of the men of Rome into the island, that name was done away, and it was called Caer-Llion, for there they were wont to dwell in the winter." *Owen's translation, vide Coxe.*—Geoffroy, of Monmouth, on the authority of Tyssilio, derives the name from Lleon, a British prince, and Mr. Williams is of the same opinion.—I cannot avoid noticing, however, the etymology of Caerleon, as it is defined by Mr. Owen. This gentleman neither admits its derivation from Lleon, the British king, nor from Caer-legion, as having been the station of a Roman legion, which is the most prevalent opinion; but from Caer-Llion, a city near *streams* or *torrents*, because, "probably the situation is, or was formerly, on the extremity of the range of the tides." *Append. Coxe.*—This definition, from the critical knowledge of Mr. Owen in the Cambrian language, deserves every consideration.

that

that name, we may with an equal degree of propriety believe, that it occupied no other spot than that which is positively specified therein: In this we are absolutely told, that the Caerleon of the Romans stands on the scite of the ancient city Caer Wysg, and the impropriety of adhering to this opinion, is to us by no means obvious.—Those who entertain a different opinion, receive this passage partially: they admit that it proves the existence of an ancient British town, on the banks of the Usk, and seek for its position in some other spot. Some conceive, that the scite of the ancient town or fortress in question, may be recognized in the old encampment in Lantarnam park, a mile to the north-west of the present Caerleon: observing, that although it might have been first known by the name of Caer-Llion, in compliment to Beli, it afterwards received that of Bellingstoke; a title which it still retains. Churchyard speaks of it to that effect, describing it as a most tremendous fortification, and adding, that "Bel-

linus

linus Magnus made this be called Bellingstoke *."

Caerleon acquired the name of *Isca Silurum*, under the Romans, and became the chief station of the second Augustan legion, of whose labours, as before observed, such numerous proofs occur to observation, about this place in the present day. It was likewise called *Isca Augusta*, and *Isca Colonia*, by different writers, in early times, and in Antonine's Itinerary, *Isca Legionis secundæ Augustæ*. During the residence of the Romans in Monmouthshire, Caerleon appears to have been

* " A hill most notable neere Carleon, a myle from the town:—a very high hill of a marveilous strength, which was a strong fort in Arthur's daies."

" Ten thousand men, may lodge them there unseene,
In trebble dykes, that gards the fortresse well:
And yet amid, the fort a goodly greene,
Where that a power, and mightie camp may dwell;
In spyte of world, if soldiers victuall have.
* * * * * *
* * * * * *
The hill commaunds a marvels way and scope,
It seems it stood, farre off for townes defence,
And in the warres, it was Caerleon's hope:"—

their

their favourite city. How long they remained in possession of it, is not exactly ascertained. We are told, that under Agricola, the Britons began to prefer a life of peace and security, to that independance which ever exposed them to the tumults and calamities of war, and were perfectly reconciled to their new government after a short time. This pervading tranquillity left the conquerors at full leisure to improve the state of the country in subjection, and Caerleon, it is evident, was not neglected. The whole province remained in the hands of the Romans, till their army was recalled to Rome to quiet the disturbances that raged in the bosom of their own distracted empire. A small force was indeed dispatched after this from Rome into Britain, to assist the natives against their enemies, but to Caerleon they probably never afterwards returned.—The exact period in which the Romans left the country, is of little moment: chronologers differ respecting it, and only agree in supporting one point, namely, that it took place between the years 422 and 437 of the Christian

tian æra. We hence perceive that Caerleon might have been under their protection for three centuries and a half, allowing that Agricola, or perhaps Julius Frontinus, fixed his station here about the year 76 or 80, as is commonly believed *. After the final departure of the Romans from the isle of Britain, the history of Caerleon becomes involved in darkness for the space of many centuries. The records of the Welsh historians were not silent certainly respecting it during this particular interval of time: these records are yet extant, and afford abundant information, but unfortunately their details are so much obscured with fable, as to render them in almost every respect improbable. As to the relations of Geoffry of Monmouthshire, one of the most copious writers who have treated of the events that happened during that period, it is not sufficient to say they are to be admitted with suspicion, they sometimes stagger belief, and still more frequently, put credulity itself to the blush.

* Some say not before the time of *Antoninus Pius.*]

The

The state of Caerleon in the reign of Gwrtheyrn, or as the English call him, Vortigern, and Vortimer his son, Aurelius Ambrosius, and Uther Pendragon, the immediate predecessors of Arthur, cannot now be ascertained *; nor is it at all certain by which of

* Henry, of Huntingdon, speaks of Nazaloed, whom he styles the greatest of all the British kings, as being the sovereign of Britain in the year 508; when he was overthrown and slain in battle by the Saxons. His immediate successor is unknown, but six years after, the celebrated Arthur; before a Silurian chieftain, was elected by the states of Britain to the supreme authority, and swayed the sceptre as their king.—Of the latter, a few words may be advanced in this place, with much propriety: the life of Arthur is an interesting topic, to which the memory adverts with peculiar pleasure, in retracing the history of Caerleon; the accredited transactions of his life, are, in a certain measure, implicated with the annals of this place in early times, and claim attention.

The very existence of this "British worthy," has been well disputed; and it has been also as ably vindicated by several modern writers, who have deemed this matter deserving of discussion. The marvellous exploits attributed to him by the voice of common fame, merit no remark, they are absurd and untenable, but the line of parallel between the real and imaginary Arthur, has been drawn with due discrimination, and the visionary hero that amused our infant fancy, fades and disappears, while the character of the real Arthur becomes established at least, upon a firmer basis than before. In support of this opinion, it would be imprudent to enter the field of controversy: the subject has been fully amplified already, and we may be content to avail ourselves of some few of the more striking arguments that have been brought forward on both sides of the question, to assist reflection while

 musing

of the British princes it was inhabited in after times.—In the lively fictions of the romantic writers before alluded to, the most brilliant

musing over the ruins of this ancient place.—The observations of Mr. Coxe, in his history of Monmouthshire, immediately attract our notice. "Although," says this writer, "numerous authors, of great talents, have written in favour of Arthur; and many historians have assented to the proofs which they have advanced, yet their opinions are discordant and contradictory. They only agree in supporting his existence, but differ in the most material circumstances of his lineage, birth, life, and death. The incredible accounts of the British hero given by Geoffry of Monmouth, have cast an air of fable over his real exploits, and rendered even his existence doubtful."

Another writer, Mr. Whitaker, who enters minutely into the history of Arthur, for this very reason makes a contrary inference: he allows that the poets and historians relate his adventures in a manner too extraordinary to be admitted, but is still convinced, these exaggerated tales are not without foundation.—"Many of the actions attributed to Arthur by the Welsh chronicles of Britain," he tells us, "are as absurd in themselves, as they are spurious in their authority. Written, as those narratives were, many centuries after the facts, and being merely the authentic accounts of Arthur, embellished with the fictions, and distorted by the perversions of folly, they are inconsistent equally with the state of the times, and history of the continent, and the island. And the ignorance of the forgers, and credulity of their abettors, can be equalled only by the injudiciousness and incredulity of the opponents to both. If some accounts of Arthur and Cunobeline, in these histories, be certainly spurious, others are as certainly genuine, and the relations of Suetonius, Dio, and Nennius, are not to be rejected because of the falsehoods which imposture has ingrafted upon them, and the absurdity admitted with them."—"The existence of Arthur is evinced, (continues Mr. Whitaker,) by that of the

brilliant period Caerleon has to boast of, was during the reign of Arthur: on what foundation this idea has been conceived, is altogether doubtful.

the fables which have at once annihilated his actions, and his name, with the misjudging critic. And the reasoner's arguments really turn against himself, and demonstrate the point which they were intended to disprove."—To the same effect, but in language more dispassionate, another writer allows, that Arthur, as a hero and a consummate warrior, appears illustrious in our history; but, as a being of romance, he adds, "his splendour has dazzled the world." "It has been generally inferred," continues this writer, "that the great atchievements of this hero, created those illusory actions and scenes depicted in the Mabinogion, or Juvenile Tales; and some authors, with such phantoms playing before their eyes, have denied existence to such a person altogether. But that there was a prince of that name, who often led the Britons successfully to battle against the Saxons, in the commencement of the sixth century, there ought not to be any doubt; for he is mentioned by cotemporary writers, whose works are still extant; namely, Llywarc, Merzin, and Taliesin; and he is often recorded in the Triads, which are documents worthy of credit; but neither by these poets, nor in the Triads, is he in any respect exalted to that rank in which the world now beholds his name, or extolled above other princes, who held similar stations in the country *."

"Llywarch hên," another author †, tells us, "lived in the sixth and seventh century. He was a prince of Argoed, in Cumberland. He visited the court of Arthur, and consumed his most vigorous years in opposing the Anglo-Saxons. As they advanced, he took refuge, with his surviving children, in Powys, and shared in the wars of the hospitable Cynddylan. Most of his poems are of historical utility."—In one of these, his elegy on Geraint ab Erbin, a chieftain of Devon-

* Vide Article Arthur, Dr. Rees's New Cyclopædia.

† Turner's Vindication.

shire,

doubtful. That the city of Caerleon then became the metropolis of South Britain, and continued to be the residence of the British kings for a considerable space of time after, is admitted by many: the prevailing notion

shire, Arthur is thus particularly noticed as a hero, but still as a leader who held an inferior rank to Geraint.

Yn Llongborth llâs i Arthur
Gwyr dewr cymnynynt a dur;
Ammherawdyr llywiadyr llavur.

A passage which Mr. Owen translates in the following manner:

"At Llongborth were slain to Arthur
Valiant men who hewed, with steel:
He was the emperor and director of the toil."

Giraldus, Powel, and others, acquaint us, that in the year 1179, the sepulchre of king Arthur, and his queen, was discovered in the isle of Afalon, without the Abbey of Glastonbury. Henry the Second, happening to be at Pembroke in that year, heard of the fame, and burial place of Arthur, from one of the Welsh bards, in the recital of an old historic poem; and being anxious to ascertain the truth of it, ordered strict search to be made on the spot, in the course of which the remains of Arthur and his queen were discovered: these were enclosed in the hollow of an elder-tree, fifteen feet below the surface of the ground. The bones of Arthur were of an almost incredible size, and there were ten wounds in the skull, one of which, much larger than the rest, was supposed to have occasioned his death. Over the grave was laid a stone, with a cross of lead, and upon the lower side of the stone were engraven these words, "Hic jacet sepultus inclytus Rex Arthuris in insula Avalonia." Here lies buried he famous king Arthur, in the isle of Afalon.—Leland, the antiquary, also speaks of the tomb and epitaph of Arthur, though in somewhat ambiguous terms. Epit. Arturii. *Hic jacet* Arturus flos Regnum, gloria Regni, &c. *Vide Itin. T.* 3. *p.* 102.

among

among the natives of the place, is nearly also to the same effect; they believe it was during the eventful reign of that monarch, that Caerleon shone with an infinitely greater degree of splendour, than it had ever before displayed, or than it could maintain in after ages, although every circumstance within their knowledge, must tend to destroy this conjecture.—The ancient ruins of any consequence that have been discovered in this place, uniformly prove, so far as they can be ascertained, to be the wreck of the old Roman city.

Arthur, we are to reflect, was elected to the supreme authority in a time of the greatest trouble: he was chosen for his superior abilities as their leader, at the period when the Britons were most distressed by their inveterate enemies, the Saxons; and the only glory to which this military hero appears to have aspired, was to perpetuate his fame by defeating those invaders. A life of active,

and unremitted warfare, such as that which the real Arthur presents us with, would leave him little leisure to bestow unnecessary attention to the embellishment even of his favourite city. Certainly the memorials of British magnificence that have heretofore, at least, been detected about the place, are so very inconsiderable, as to authorise this plausible conjecture, that the city underwent but few improvements after the Romans left it. Arthur, it is not to be denied, might have converted the heathen temples of the Romans into edifices of public worship for the Christian faith; or overthrowing these, erect others for the like purpose: he might have built a palace suitable to his dignity here; or have strengthened the fortifications of the place; but little more, it is easy to conceive, was effected by him, or his successors, toward the improvement of the city. To the fortifications, most likely, as a warrior, he would pay due regard, since, notwithstanding all his victories over the

the Saxons, he was continually pressed and harassed by them. It is recorded, that after he had obtained his eighth victory over them, they so closely invested him in this city, that the ninth battle, in which fortune declared for him, took place immediately upon this spot.

The flourishing condition of Caerleon at some remote period of time, is so well attested by the numerous memorials of its humbled grandeur, at this day visible, that it would be absurd to dispute the fact; and scepticism the most unpardonable to distrust entirely the evidence of those, who, but a few centuries ago, saw much more of these remains, than are at present to be observed.—Such was its extent, according to tradition, that the city, with the suburbs on both sides of the river, covered a tract of country nine miles in circumference; extending from the present town as far as Christ Church and St. Julian's, in a south and westerly direction. To this the doggerel metre of the old poet alludes,

"The citie reacht to Creetchurch than,
And to Saint Gillyans both:
Which yet appears to view of man
To try this tale of troth."

CHURCHYARD.

This space of ground is now converted into fields, besprinkled with a few gardens and little cottages. The vast profusion of broken bricks, stones, and other building materials, that lie scattered in the earth at a considerable distance beyond the precincts of the present town, leave us no reason to doubt that the suburbs once extended very far: whether to the limits which tradition mentions, is not quite so certain.—Great quantities of Roman bricks, coins, and jasper tesseræ have been discovered, according to Mr. Coxe, both at St. Julian's and Penros, but this proves very little: such remains may only mark the stations of some magnificent Roman villas, that were situated remote from the town. On the other hand, it is not to be forgotten, that the vestiges of ancient buildings are every where perceptible in the fields that lie on this side

side of the city walls to a considerable distance; and it is even possible that the streets of the suburbs might have once extended thus far. The assertions of Giraldus respecting Caerleon, have been considered. Those of Churchyard are not unworthy of remark, since he saw the place at a period much later than Giraldus, and speaks with more precision of its ruins. He mentions wonderful huge and long pavements, extant in his days, together with subterraneous caves * that are no longer visible; certain traces of ancient pavements are believed to lie beneath the surface of the earth at this time; but the caves he alludes to, if they yet remain, appear to be unknown to the natives of the place.

" There are such vautes, and hollow caves,
Such walles and condits deepe:
Made all like pypes of earthen pots,
Wherein a child may creepe.

Such

* In a note to his poem, Churchyard makes the following curious observation. " I have seen caves underground, at this day, (1587,) that goe I know not how farre, all made of excellent work, and goodly greate stones, both over head and under foot, and close and fine round about

Such streates and pavements sondrie waies,
To every market towne:
Such bridges built in elders daies
And thinges of such renowne
As men may muse of to behold."

At no very distant period after the introduction of Christianity into the island of Britain, we learn that many churches were established for the promotion of the Christian faith in Monmouthshire. Caerleon then became the metropolitan See of South Britain, and St. Dubricius is reputed to have been the first archbishop. This dignified, and holy office, he resigned at an advanced age, to David, the tutelary saint of Wales. David being the uncle of king Arthur, and having a powerful ascendency over his nephew, prevailed on him to translate the see from this place to Menevia; or as it was called in memory of him in after times, St. David's.

about the whole cave." These might possibly be sought for still with success either on the grounds of Mr. Waters about the castle mount: the bear-house field of Mr. Hughes, or near Arthur's round table in the field adjacent; or at all events, with proper search, in either of these places, it is conjectured, some curious particulars might be discovered.

This

This is by no means an improbable trait of historic information, and if correct, affords a striking evidence of contrast between the past and present state of Caerleon:—one of the chief motives that were assigned for the removal of the metropolitan Church to this remote corner of the country, was, because the latter being a place of retirement and obscurity, was better suited for pious meditations, than this great and populous city.

Giraldus speaks of the Churches founded here in the earliest ages of Christianity. One, he acquaints us, was dedicated to the martyr Julius, and graced with a choir of virgins devoted to God: another was dedicated to his companion Aaron; both of whom had acquired the crown of martyrdom in this place. St. Alban, likewise, is stated to have had a Church devoted to his memory here, the scite of which is still observable upon an eminence to the eastward of the town.

These

These religious edifices appear to have been demolished nearly, before the days of Leland, since he does not speak of them: thus far he observes. "In the towne is *now* but one Paroche Chirche, and that is St. Cadocus." The Church of St. Julius stood on a spot adjacent to the ruinous mansion-house of St. Julian's, where its scanty remains may be partly traced in the walls of a spacious old barn. There is a floating tradition yet extant, that Gwenhwyvar, (whom the English call Guenever,) the queen of king Arthur, was crowned in this Church, at the same time that Arthur underwent the like ceremony at the Church of St. Aaron's; and it is asserted further, that on this solemn occasion, St. Dubricius officiated, together with the archbishops of Caerleon, York, and London.—Of the old house, (St. Julian's,) the stranger has a pretty distinct view across the meadows in the vicinity of Caerleon: it stands upon a rising ground that commands a pleasing prospect over the bottom in which the town is situated.

situated. The only circumstance for which this antiquated mansion is in any respect remarkable, is, that of having been at one time the residence of the celebrated lord Herbert of Cherbury, a learned, effeminate, and eccentric character, who shone conspicuously at the court of queen Elizabeth.

During the warlike times in which the tranquility of this part of the country was incessantly disturbed by the Saxons, or the Normans, and previous to the conquest effected ultimately by the kings of England, the history of Caerleon is not much less obscure than in earlier days. Occasionally it is mentioned, but always slightly. Sometimes it was possessed by the Welsh, and sometimes by the Saxons, and after that again by the Normans; all which can only demonstrate its fate at certain periods, and the calamities it sustained between the contending parties. Some few only of the events recorded, are worthy of regard. In 1173, it

was

was held by the forces of Henry the Second, king of England, when Owen ap Jorwerth drew up an army of the Welsh against it; and after several warm disputes, entered the town by force of arms, and took most of the inhabitants prisoners. Then directing his whole strength against the castle, would have probably taken that by force likewise, had not the garrison thought proper to avail itself of an advantageous capitulation, in favour of themselves, and the prisoners taken in the town, who were to be set at liberty in consequence of the fortress being surrendered to the besiegers. The following year, Howel took his uncle, Owen Pencarn, the rightful heir of Gwent and Caerleon, prisoner in this place; and after pulling out his eyes, otherwise maltreated him, in order to secure the possession of his estates exclusively to his own posterity. But this act of cruelty, and unprovoked aggression, did not long remain unpunished, for on the Saturday of the same week, a prodigious army of Normans and Saxons,

Saxons, which Owen had not entertained the least suspicion of, came unexpectedly before the town, and seizing both that and the castle, in despite of the vigorous resistance opposed to them by Owen's forces, at one blow deprived the marauding chieftain of his ill-gotten acquisitions.

Some other disasterous events of the like nature, have occurred here also at various times: one especially deserves mention; during the wars between prince Llywelyn and Henry the Third, in 1231, the town was burnt to the ground, and the English garrison stationed in it, consistently with the vindictive policy of those two hostile princes, were put to the sword. —After the final conquest of the Cambrian territories, by Edward the First, Caerleon, with its dependencies, was restored to the family of the earl of Clare, upon whom it had been bestowed at a former period; the Welsh having in the interval succeeded in wresting it from the earl's possession. Since that remote

time,

time, as it is reasonable to conclude, Caerleon has devolved by purchase or descent, to many other families.

The town of Caerleon, including the village of *Ultra Pontem*, which lies immediately contiguous to it, on the opposite side of the river Usk, is by no means so considerable in point of extent, or of population, as we were at the first glance inclined to conceive: the houses straggle over a wide space of ground, but the area within the walls is laid out chiefly into orchards, fields, and gardens. There is nothing also in the appearance of the place to denote respectability, except the houses of some few gentlemen, resident in the town. Caerleon, it is to be regretted, has neither trade, nor manufactures; both of which might be conducted here with spirit and convenience. Mr. Butler, who has a house in the town, is proprietor of a considerable tin-work, long since established in *Lanverchra* parish, at the distance of a mile and a half from the town, in

in the road to Ponty-pool.—The remark of a late tourist, that " Caerleon derives all its modern consequence from a participation in the manufacture of Ponty-pool *," is entirely erroneous: the japanned wares, for the manufactory of which the town of Ponty-pool is celebrated, being confined, in those parts, exclusively to that place, and the town of Usk.

In the garden of Mr. Butler, I was shewn the base of a stone pillar, of a noble size, that had been recently taken up in this spot; other remains of pillars had been discovered also near the same place before. The gardener assured me still further, that whilst digging very lately in another part of the ground, which he distinctly pointed out, his spade accidentally struck upon what he conceived to be a low flight of stone steps, and which, to all appearance, were yet lying in their original position. The number of these steps altogether, could not be ascertained; two or three,

* Barber.

only, were uncovered, and no more were sought after, because at that season of the year, the removal of the earth, to pursue their course, would have proved injurious to the garden; and those even, which his curiosity had prompted him to disclose, were again covered with the mould, and the ground planted as before.

This garden is separated only by a lofty wall, from a piece of ground on the premises of Mr. Gethin, wherein a very curious old Roman monument was discovered about two years ago. Mr. Gethin's men were digging a saw pit, by their master's orders, in the spot, when they found at a small depth below the surface of the earth, one remarkable large fragment of an inscribed stone; and three others, also, were soon after perceived within a few feet of the same place. There is every reason for believing that these fragments altogether belonged to the same pillar: their aspect, the similarity of the free-stone, and tenor of the inscription, tending most completely to confirm

firm that idea. Almost immediately after these fragments were dug up, much of the inscriptions were defaced by the facility of the mason employed to clear off such *superfluities*; fortunately for the satisfaction of the inquisitive stranger, a portion of them were transcribed by Mr. Evans, of Caerau, before the characters were entirely obliterated*. These massive fragments of useful stone, were not destined to remain long unserviceable to the owner. After a short deliberation, upon the advice of several neighbours, who wished they might be preserved for the reputation of the place, they were ordered to be sawn into pieces of a convenient size for the repairs of his house, and premises: certain pieces of the

* Mr. Evans is persuaded, that the whole formed originally a kind of pillar: two of the parts he is convinced belonged to one stone, and measured together nine feet in length, nineteen inches in breadth, and fifteen inches in thickness. The mutilated abbreviations on one side, he interprets as a votive inscription by the second Augustan legion, and the other probably indicated the time in which it was erected. The third stone, from its superior size, might serve as the base, and the only inference to be drawn from it seems to be, that it was dedicated in the consulate of Maximus and Urinatus Urbanus. This information he communicated to Mr. Coxe, who has inserted it in the Appendix to his History of Monmouthshire.

stone we readily recognized in the corner of a wall, and frame work of a window;—the reader will best conceive with what an emotion of astonishment and regret we detected at the same time various other portions of this classical memorial of antiquity that were consigned to a far more ignoble purpose; literally that of re-edifying *a dirty pig-stie!*

It is worthy of observation, that the spot in which these discoveries were made, lies on the north side of the Church, close to the burial ground: a spot precisely in the center of the old town; and from the number of squared stones, pillars, and other striking vestiges of some unknown stately building, that have at various periods been perceived here, a conjecture has prevailed, that the celebrated temple of Diana, built by the Romans in this city, was situated on, or near, the place where the Church now stands. That such remains did not constitute any part of the old Cathedral, for several reasons, we think

think sufficiently evident. Many heathen memorials have been discovered within, or about the town; some few of which are yet extant. The most remarkable of these are the two votive stones mentioned by Camden, one of which commemorates the restoration of the temple of Diana in this city, by *Titus Flavius Postumius Varus*, in the following words:

T. Fl. Postumius Varus
V. C. Leg. Temp. Dianæ
Restituit.

which Gibson reads *Titus Flavius Postumius Varus Veteranus Cohortis Legionis Secundæ Templum Diana restituit.*—Horsley, whose opinion is entitled also to consideration, defines it in a different manner, though nearly to the same effect.—The other stone mentioned by this author, is an altar dedicated to Severus, and his two sons, Caracalla, and Geta. Both of these were removed from Caerleon by Bishop Godwin; and are to be seen now, in a very illegible state, in the walls of the court-yard of Mathern-Place, in Monmouthshire.

Ruins of Roman buildings, pillars, pavements, bricks, monumental stones, urns, sarcophagi, and coins, must have once been numerous here beyond all conception; since, after an interval of fourteen hundred years, during which they have been certainly sought after, and applied to various purposes, the store appears inexhaustible. Some few of the more industrious among the labouring poor, find every winter a profitable employment, in digging at a venture for the stones, and even bricks and tiles; many, if not the far greater number of small houses about the place, have been also built, and are kept in repair with the materials purloined from these subterraneous resources. There is no kind of restriction upon the inhabitants, to prevent their digging for these materials in the *broad-way*, which has hitherto furnished them with plenty. The space enclosed within the walls, if examined with the like unceasing perseverance, would perhaps be no less productive. Last winter, in clearing the *bear-*

house

house field, opposite to that in which Arthur's table is contained, in order to set potatoes, a vast number of large and small stones were found, more than a dozen of which were estimated at little less than half a ton, or a ton weight each; and some much more. The expense of raising these stones out of the ground is trifling, rarely exceeding six-pence, or nine-pence per ton, except for the largest; the discovery of these was of some consequence to Mr. Hughes, who has a lease of the field, the whole being of fine free-stone.

Such is the prevailing taste of travellers, to obtain possession of every portable relic of antiquity, collected about this place; and such the indifference of the people to preserve them, that they scarcely ever remain for any great length of time in the town after they are discovered. A small number have indeed been hoarded here with more than ordinary care, in the hands of various individuals, most of which we saw; for being under the

escort of "John," as the people familiarly called our *Ciceroni*, we found an easy access to them, without the formality of any other introduction.—When Mr. Wyndham ascended the lofty keep of Caerleon castle, he observed a large Basso-relievo of a Venus, with a dolphin sporting in her hand, which he admired, and pronounced to be an undoubted piece of Roman sculpture. Since that time, the tower has been razed to the foundation; and this stone became the property of Mr. Richards, an inhabitant of the town. From recent exposure in his garden, the figure has assumed, no doubt, a much ruder aspect than it at first exhibited, but remains of Roman sculpture being far from common, indifferent as it appeared, I purchased it, in addition to various other antiques that had been collected about the town *.—At Mrs. Prichard's we

* This assemblage consists of various fragments of inscribed, or figured Roman bricks, tiles, and specimens of pottery, together with a few pieces of Roman money, impression of an ancient episcopal seal of Menevia, &c. Coins of great consideration with the medalist are sometimes found here,

ANTIQUE BASSO RELIEVO OF ROMAN SCULPTURE

found in

CAERLEON CASTLE.

London: Published as the Act directs by B. Duncan May 1. 1787.

UNDER SIDE
of the
ANTIQUE BASSO RELIEVO *of* ROMAN SCULPTURE
found in
CAERLEON CASTLE.

Published as the Act directs by T. Penneman May 1.1815.

ELEGANT REMAINS of ROMAN EARTHENWARE
and a FIBULA
discovered in the Broadway
CAERLEON.

Published as the Act directs by T. Donovan May 1.1803

A FRAGMENT of ORNAMENTED
ROMAN POTTERY; & COINS
found in the Broadway
CAERLEON.

Published as the Act directs by B.Donovan May 1.1805.

SEAL *of the* ANCIENT SEE *of* MENEVIA. *now* ST DAVIDS:
A ROMAN FIBULA
and other Antiques dug up in CAERLEON.

Published as the Act directs by S. Hieronym May 1.1805.

ANTIQUE TRIANGULAR TILE
and
FRAGMENT OF A ROMAN BRICK
from CAERLEON.

Published as the Act directs by E. Donovan, May 1.st 1805.

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INSCRIPTIONS

ON

THREE ANCIENT BRICKS,

CAERLEON.

Published as the Act directs by E. Harcourt May 1.1803.

ROMAN TILE, LAMP, COINS, &c.

dug up in

CAERLEON.

London: Published as the Act directs by J. Britton & E. Brayley, 1st March 1801.

we saw a large and curious tile, that had been dug up some years ago in her own garden; a spot in which some other curious antiques have been at intervals discovered likewise. The shape of this tile is remarkable; it is flat, and rather wider at one extremity than the other, with a raised ledge along each side. The impression in relief, upon which

here, none of which we had the good fortune to meet with; several of an inferior value we were able to procure from different persons in the town, of which the following are the most remarkable.—One a laureated head. IMP. CONSTANTINUS, P. F. AUG. Reverse, a figure, with a scarce legend SOLI INVICTO COMITI; exergue PIET.....Another with the head bearing a radiated crown, VICTORIANUS—AUG. Reverse, female figure, legend PAX AUG.—A third, with a laureated head, CONSTANTINUS AUG. Reverse, an altar VOTIS XX: legend obscure.—A fourth, head with a radiated crown. IMP.—POSTUMUS P. L. AUG. Reverse, a female figure, legend PAX AUG.—Fifth, female head, legend ANTONIA AUGUSTA; reverse, a figure holding a lamp, legend TI. CLAUDIUS CÆS.....S. C. in the field. Two others in large brass, much mutilated, one of which is conjectured to be of Vespasian, and the other of Severus.

A parcel of very scarce coins of the Roman emperors, &c. was found a few years since, under one of the arches of Caerleon bridge.—Mr. Manby met with one also in this town of Hadrianus, bearing the rare reverse Britannia. Coins of Hadrian, bearing this reverse, were known in foreign cabinets before, one is mentioned by Gesner, and another by Vallant: those of Claudius, Commodus, and Antoninus Pius, have been also found with this reverse; but all are rare except that of Antoninus Pius.

the

the abbreviations LEG. II. AVG. appear, prove it indisputably to be the work of the second Augustan legion, which we know was partly stationed at Caerleon. Amongst the ruins, in various places about the fields in the outskirts of the town, fragments of this kind of tile occurred pretty frequently. They seem to have been all about the same size, namely twenty-three inches in length, fifteen in width at the broadest end, and fourteen at the narrowest; all the inscriptions upon this peculiar kind of tile, when perceptible, are uniformly alike, so far as we observed; fragments of other bricks attracted notice as we proceeded, in which the legends were rather different *.

Against the wall of an out-house, in the garden of Mr. Williams the currier, is placed a stone about three feet in length, and two in breadth, inscribed with Roman characters; now scarcely legible through a coat of plaster, with which the surface has been white-

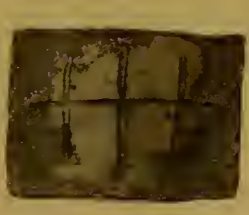
* Vide Appendix.

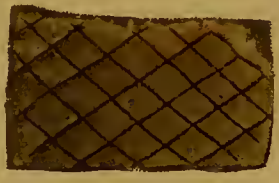
washed.

washed. Several of the letters are indeed visible through the lime; and with the obliging assistance of Mrs. Williams, to whom the words appeared to be familiar, we contrived to trace the following: "Julia essevunda vixit annos xxxv." Mrs. Williams then conducted us into an enclosed piece of ground, opposite to the house, now converted into a kitchen garden, in order to shew us the exact spot where this stone was found. It was observed some years ago upon the removal of the earth, to the depth of three or four feet below the surface, lying horizontally in the ground: beneath it they perceived both the remains of burnt bones, and wood charred by the the action of fire; from whence it was inferred, that this had been a place of interment in the time of the Romans. The stone in question was assuredly intended to record the memory of some one who had lived thirty-five years.

At the close of half an hour's saunter beyond

beyond the town, we reached the cold bath, erected of late years by Mr. Butler, where several inscribed stones are preserved, that have been found in this neighbourhood; and which are supposed to be sepulchral memorials likewise. These, I must confess, did not entirely answer the expectations I had formed of them from common report; unluckily they are all of a small size, and being placed with other materials in the main wall, are only visible within the building. Having procured the key, we therefore entered this damp and gloomy place, to inspect them; but not without the utmost caution, the temporary, loose, and crazy flooring over the spring, audibly foreboding, at the pressure of every footstep, that we might otherwise, very possibly, dip headlong into the water, contrary to our own wishes, and certainly without permission of the owner. After wandering for a few minutes in the dark, we were just enabled to perceive the objects of our visit, at the farthest end of the place. To decypher the characters





INSCRIBED *and* ORNAMENTED STONES
In the wall of M^r Butler's Cold Bath
CAERLEON.

Published as the Act directs by T. Hanover. May 1785.

characters with which they are charged, now became a matter of difficulty, the window shutters being nailed too securely to be thrown open, at the same time that the door-way could admit only a very scanty ray of light, to illumine that particular part of the wall in which they are at present stationary. We contrived, however, after being accustomed to this light for a little time, with some trouble, to trace the letters and ornamental lines with tolerable fidelity; one is in the Roman, and another in what has been termed the early British character *.

Returning from hence along the broad way, we passed through the town, and again arrived at the scite of the old castle. Traces of this ancient building, as before observed, are few and inconsiderable in our days: even upon the mount, which formerly sustained that gigantic tower, the pride and strength of Caerleon castle, we found a farmer's man

* Vide Appendix.

hoeing

hoeing potatoes: no vestige of its masonry is now perceptible, and the steep ascent is divided for the humble purpose above-mentioned, into narrow strips, that wreath in a spiral manner, from the base to the summit of the hill.—Fortunately, to relieve the reader, already, no doubt, fatigued with the dry prolixity of detail, inseparable from the pursuits of the antiquary, our ramble about the town in search of its antiquities, terminated here; after being amply gratified with a much wider range of remark, and speculation, than we could possibly have entertained the least conception of, in the outset of our morning's walk.—Once more, therefore, we are to return, and take a transitory view of modern Caerleon.

This town is situated upon a rising ground, in a remarkable deep bottom, that is prettily embosomed by lofty, verdant hills; which opportunely rise at a less or greater distance, to skirt its environs. Here the Usk assumes

the

the importance of a noble river, that would be highly advantageous to Caerleon, should it ever rise to the consequence of a manufacturing town. It is at present of small consideration in this respect; but it certainly contributes, in a striking manner, to beautify the fertile tract of country, through which it undulates, in the immediate vicinage of the place.—Neither is the Usk to be forgotten for other reasons, this river has been long since celebrated for the abundance of excellent fish which it produces; the salmon of the Usk, in particular, is excellent. This, it will be recollected, has not escaped the notice of the author of "the Worthiness of Wales," who, in his customary language, when speaking of the river Usk, makes the following observation:

"Great store of fish, is caught within this flood,
* * * * * * *
A thing to note, when sammon failes in Wye,
(And season there: goes out as order is)
Than still of course, in Oske doth sammon lye,
And of good fish, in Oske you shall not mis.

And

And this seemes straunge, as doth through Wales appeere
In some one place, are sammons all the yeere:
So fresh, so sweet, so red, so crimp withall,
That man might say, loe, sammon here at call.

In a certain measure the remark of Churchyard is strictly true; the people of Caerleon for example, fish for Salmon ten months in the year, in the river Usk, and always with success. This may excite surprise in the minds of those who are aware of the periodical migrations of this fish, from the rivers into the sea, after the spawning season; although the fact is so well attested, that I shall not dispute the veracity of our information. One peculiarity in the mode of cookery, practised here, deserves attention. The fish is no sooner caught in the adjacent river, than it is conveyed to the town; and if sold, the purchaser, after cutting it into pieces of a convenient size, parboils it in spring water. After this, the pieces are allowed to cool, and when required for the table, they are boiled in the former liquor. This mode of dressing salmon

salmon has evidently the ascendency over any other that can be devised, in towns and other places remote from the haunts of this useful fish; the flesh acquiring by that means, a degree of firmness, and delicious flavour, very far superior to what might be conceived.

Salmon, in this state of excellent perfection, will always bear a handsome price. This is a natural conclusion, yet I must still confess, it was not without surprise we further learnt, that although these fish are caught in abundance at only a few score yards from the town, they are not unfrequently sold to the inhabitants at nine-pence, one shilling, or even so high as eighteen-pence a pound.—The cause of these extraordinary prices, under such a circumstance, we became acquainted with, some time after in another part of the country, where salmon is dressed in the same luxurious manner as at Caerleon: the fish, it appears, must be parboiled immediately after it is taken; or at the farthest

before the tide *returns*; and unless this precaution can be taken, they tell you "the salmon is good for nothing." Whatever, therefore, of the precarious stock the fishermen may chance to have left unsold by the next tide, is retailed to the poorer classes, either for immediate use, or for salting, at a third, fourth, or even sixth part of the price it was valued at two or three hours before.—This may account for the extremely low prices at which travellers through Wales have so frequently stated the value of salmon in the principality. Even this, however, can only happen in those places from whence there is no ready means of conveying the refuse of the fish by sea to Bristol, or any other opulent town, being always certain at such markets to receive a price worth their additional trouble.

There is another fish known in Monmouthshire by the name of *skerling*, that is frequent in the Usk and Ebwy, which Mr. Coxe seemed

seemed to think not common in other English rivers, and this being from its local name unknown to me, I proposed to make some enquiry concerning it. From Mr. Evans, of Caerau, whom we had the pleasure of conversing with at Caerleon upon this subject, we were apprised that the former gentleman was indebted solely to him for this suggestion; at the same time that he acquainted us, with the utmost candour and politeness, that he had been himself misled into that opinion, which he was then enabled to correct. Since that conjecture was advanced, he had consulted the volumes of our "English Linnæus," Mr. Pennant, and perceived from thence, that the fish in question was by no means so local as was at first imagined, being nothing more than the fish delineated in the work of that natural historian, under the name of the Parr *, or young Coal-fish.

After

* A short digression on the passage above alluded to, may not be inexcusable in this place. Ichthyology being a department of natural

 history

After a stay of two days in this delightful spot, we recrossed the Usk, over the old bridge of Caerleon, and pursuing our former tract

history which few have regarded with attention, it should afford us no matter of surprise, if the veracity of Mr. Pennant's observations upon this intricate subject, be implicitly relied upon in general: the reputation of that laborious naturalist, is so well established in the public mind, as to remove distrust in any instance of importance; and hence it happens, that an error of some magnitude has hitherto remained unnoticed in the British Zoology of that writer, concerning the Parr in question: no less, it will be perceived, than the unqualified assertion of its being a young Coal-fish.

How such an idea could have escaped the pen of this writer, we cannot easily devise, since they are not of the same *genus*, nor even of the same *order*. His Parr is of the Salmon tribe, as the posterior fin on the back sufficiently testifies, without descending to minuter characters; beside which, his Parr has only one dorsal fin, whereas the coal-fish has three dorsal fins, extending altogether nearly the whole length of the back. In a word, the distinction between the Coal-fish and the Salmon is so very striking, that it might be thought superfluous to point out the characters of either with more precision.

Let the critical observer, desirous of further information, refer to plate 66 of the British Zoology, in which the Parr is engraven, named and numbered 78. The description of No. 78 is that of the Coal-fish, in which the Parr is particularly mentioned, and nothing can appear more clear from the description, the index, references, &c. than that Mr. Pennant speaks of this very Parr as the Coal-fish, before it arrives at a certain size.—I suspect, that if we next compare the above-mentioned *Parr* as figured in Plate 66, with the Samlet in Plate 59, we shall have reason to believe his Parr and Samlet to be the same, notwithstanding that they are given as two distinct fishes. Both appear to me to be Samlets.—Should this conclusion be acceded to,

tract through the adjacent village, a short walk brought us once more into the direct turnpike road to Newport.—Some little peculiarity in the structure of this bridge struck our observation as we left the town; we remarked, that the carriage way presents almost a perfect level surface, from one extre-

to, the ambiguity of this affair may be in part elucidated. The Samlet, we are aware, is called a Par upon the coast of Scotland; whilst on the contrary, it is the young Coal-fish, which bears that name in several parts of England. Might not this have occasioned the mistake in the first instance?—Taking it for granted, that Mr. Pennant received the Samlet from the Scottish coast, under the local name it is known by there †, (*Par*;) and learning afterwards from some other quarter, that the young Coal-fish were called *Parrs*, he might have been led, through an absence of mind, and similarity of names, to confound one with the other.—One should imagine, truly, that Mr. Pennant would have been upon his guard against the confusion in his own mind, arising merely from the similarity of the local names, given in different places to two kinds of fish, so distinct from each other; and yet we cannot surely account for the inconsistency of what he has advanced, in any other manner. It is hardly credible, that he should be seriously inclined to think, that a *Salmo* would be transformed into a *Gadus* after a certain age, which must have taken place, if his Parr had ever become a Coal-fish.

That Mr. Pennant did not admit his Parr and Samlet to be the same, is very evident, for he describes and figures the latter, as being in no manner related to his Parr; and here I am persuaded he is again mistaken.—The Skerling of Monmouthshire, proves on inspection to be the Samlet; a fish, we may almost presume, for various reasons, to be nothing more than the young of the common Salmon, and which I shall take occasion to speak more fully of hereafter.

† Vide, his account of the Samlet.

mity of the edifice to the other, a circumstance, that added to the great length of the bridge, seemed the more remarkable. The flooring also, which, like the rest of the building, consists entirely of timber, is not fastened firmly down to the rafters, as one might expect; the planks which compose it being secured only at each extremity, by means of a kind of cross, or horizontal rail work, which permits them to have an unusually loose, elastic motion under every pressure, and occasions an unpleasant rattling, or rather stumbling noise, while carriages are passing over it.

The design of this contrivance, (which is intended only to prevent the boards from splitting under the weight of waggons, or other vehicles, heavily burthened,) has been most whimsically misconceived by various travellers; who, being at a loss to imagine the purpose of it, have summoned in the aid of fancy, to supply the defect of information. Hence, we are told, the boards which compose the

the flooring are left designedly loose, with no other view than to rise and float upon the surface of the water, when the tide happens to exceed the height of their present station; observing also, at the same time, that they are secured by means of little pegs at the ends of them, to some part of the bridge, lest they should escape entirely in very high floods.—This is not the fact: the tide, though sometimes known to rise twenty or thirty feet above the ordinary level of the river, has never risen within the memory of the oldest inhabitants, to such an alarming height as to reach these planks, and render this, or any similar precaution necessary, for the security of passengers crossing over the bridge. That accidents may have occurred here, during those violent inundations of the river, in which the bridge itself has repeatedly suffered injury, I cannot pretend to deny: this is not unlikely, although the only instance of the kind that we could learn, is that which happened about thirty years ago, to a Mrs. Williams of this

place; the tale of this disaster is fresh in recollection, and it certainly affords one very extraordinary proof, at least, in the affirmative.

The anecdote alluded to, the truth of which, itself, approaches rather to the marvellous, has been detailed already with such ludicrous embellishments, by more than one writer, that we were at first inclined to dispute the veracity of it altogether; and should still, most likely, have retained the same degree of infidelity, if we had not heard the story related in a more plausible manner, by those to whom the particulars seemed to be very accurately known.

"The heroine" of this strange adventure, (which took place in the autumn of the year 1772,) was the wife of a brazier in the town of Caerleon. She had spent the evening with an old acquaintance in the village of Ultra Pontem, and was about returning home, when observing a storm coming on, she was persuaded

persuaded to prolong her stay till a late hour of the night, in the delusive expectation that it might soon abate. At length the clock told eleven, when still perceiving these hopes were disappointed, she seriously determined to wait no longer; and having with this resolution furnished herself with a candle and lanthorn, took leave of her friend, and proceeded alone upon her journey homeward.—The pitiless beating of the storm was not the only mischance, however, that angry fortune had destined to overtake her on this unlucky night, as will appear in the sequel: scarcely was she mid-way over the bridge, in her walk towards the town, when a sudden gush of the tumultuous waters beneath her, accidentally struck against the main supports of that part of the bridge which she happened to be passing over. The crazy timbers, unable to resist the shock, gave way with a thundering crash; the superstructure they had supported immediately followed, and Mrs. Williams was precipitated, with the general wreck, into the water. Every

Every effort on her part, to resist the course of such a prodigious torrent, would have been unavailing; she firmly grasped the rails, which fortunately still remained connected with the flooring on which she stood, and other fragments of the disjointed bridge, which altogether formed a considerable raft, upon which she was hurried down the river, towards the town of Newport.

By means of the glimmering light in the lanthorn, her progress was distinctly observed from several places ashore: her cries were also heard, but for the want of boats, no assistance could be possibly given to her. At length her candle being extinguished, the course she pursued could be perceived no longer. Notwithstanding this, she was not without hope; she entertained the most sanguine expectation of relief at Newport, concluding that the bridge across the Usk at that place, would arrest the further progress of the raft, till the people of the town should be

be able to extricate her from this perilous situation. In this respect she was mistaken, for the frame work which had conveyed her thus far in security, striking with rude impetuosity against the pier of the bridge, it was immediately dashed to pieces. Happily, at this critical moment, she had the prudence of mind to get astride one of the disjointed timbers within reach, before the shattered wreck was forced by the torrent through the arches, and thus for an instant was safe again: still her fate appeared inevitable; scarcely a ray of hope remained, and as her last resource, she resigned herself to the will of Providence.

The beam she bestrode having once cleared the bridge, darted down the stream with the utmost rapidity; nothing, she was now persuaded, could divert its course, or save her from the destruction that awaited her in the furious sea to which she was hastening. About a mile below Newport, a light issuing from the cabin of a small vessel close to shore,

appeared

appeared in view. Once more her hopes revived, and although nearly exhausted with fatigue, she exerted her voice with that degree of energy which desperation could alone inspire; and in consequence of which her lamentations were heard by the master, who immediately rushed on deck to enquire the occasion of it.

The timber still floating down the stream, passed the vessel with inconceivable velocity, and the unfortunate woman, again despairing of relief, had nearly reached the entrance of the river into the Bristol channel, when the master and a seaman, who had put out the boat directly, with the humane determination of saving her, if in their power, providentially overtook her. It was not without the greatest difficulty they took her off the beam to which she clung, into their boat, where they were compelled by the violence of the water to remain for the night; and on the morning following to the utter astonishment of every one, she returned home, without having sustained

tained any other injury than that arising from the alarm, such a desperate situation must have naturally occasioned.—A new bridge of stone is in contemplation, to be built across the Usk at Caerleon, in place of the timber one now standing.

A second visit to Christ Church concluded this agreeable excursion from the Newport road to Caerleon.—On the evening before, we had toiled up the laborious ascent leading from the latter place to this venerable edifice, in order to survey its interior at our leisure; as well as at the same time to pay due attention to the ancient monument preserved here, whose miraculous virtues in the cure of all disorders, on a certain day of the year, is credulously believed amongst the country people. The preceding evening happening to be the eve of Trinity Thursday, we were unexpectedly present at the visitation of a large party of these poor deluded people to the very tomb-

tomb-stone whose fame had awakened our curiosity; and the inspection of which, indeed, had been the chief motive of our journey thither. The old clerk of Caerleon accompanied us in our walk up the road, without recollecting the circumstance: we were even debating upon the propriety of borrowing the key of the Church from the sexton, who has a cottage hard by, when we perceived the doors were already open. Upon entering the aile, the sound of several voices assailed our ears, arising, as it afterwards appeared, from a group of persons assembled together in the chancel. We accordingly passed down the Church to the spot from whence it seemed to issue; and there, to our inexpressible astonishment, we beheld a young man of very creditable appearance, with his night cap on, laying upon the bare pavement, shivering with cold, his hands uplifted, and with many pious aspirations, muttering a prayer, for the cure of some affliction, under which he appeared to labour.—During this religious farce, his friends formed

formed a spacious circle round him, some standing, some sitting, and others kneeling, as best accorded with their inclinations; but all were equally intent in watching the countenance and motion of the patient, to observe the progressive advancement of the miracle wrought upon him, in consequence of this superstitious ceremony.

Perceiving that at our approach those who were seated, rose up, I paused immediately. —"There is the old tomb-stone," whispered Jones to my fellow-traveller, pointing at the same time aside with his finger, to the stone on which the young man was laying; and so it proved to be on a nearer view. Curiosity, on this occasion, gave place to other, and I trust it will be accredited, to better feelings: the enormous magnitude of the slab, it is true, would have allowed us sufficient opportunity to trace the inscription on the stone, without disturbing this object of our pity, while the people, finding we were strangers, and learning

learning from our conductor the purpose of our visit, might have permitted us to examine it, but it would have still been, in my mind, highly indecorous to indulge any such impertinent propensity at this crisis. After a few minutes spent in observing the ceremony, we therefore left him, regretting only that his piety had not been better directed, than to the reputed sanctity of the stone, or of the two frail mortals whose ashes reposed beneath it. — Or if custom, ignorance, or superstition had induced him to spend a night of penitence upon this stone, that the indulgence of a feather bed had been allowed, in addition to the pillow on which his head alone was permitted to recline.

" Well, do you really think, gentlemen, it will do the young man any service," enquired one who had been seated in the circle, eagerly of us, as he followed our footsteps out of the Church. There was something in his manner, and attentive eye, while he spoke, that

that seemed to imply no small share of confidence in the result of the answer he should receive, for what reason we knew not, but I was not disposed, whatever might be his opinion of us, to weaken his belief in the efficacy of this extraordinary remedy; to destroy his hopes would have been painful, to have flattered them imprudent: the question was unexpected, and the reply was cautious. From this dilemma we were, however, soon relieved by *Jones*, who very innocently remarked, that "the prayers of good people, such as these saints had been, availeth much;—yet he did not *know* that it would be of any service to lay upon the cold stone all night." "Besides," added he, "the young man being sick already, may catch cold, and be worse instead of better: he may get rid of one disorder, and have another overtake him:" to this *sound* reasoning we did not think proper to withhold our assent, and the conversation ended by the countryman rejoining, that he was afraid so too.

On the thursday morning, the stools and cushions remained about the grave-stone, as on the former evening. We were also given to understand, that the poor fellow had lain in the manner we had seen him, the whole night; together with a child of about two years of age, that had the rickets, in order to brace his solids and *strengthen* him. The nature of the young man's complaint could not be learned; they only knew that he was troubled with fits, and had come from the other side of the hills *, in the firm persuasion, that after all medical aid had failed, a night thus spent in penitence must effect a cure.

The virtues of this remedy in the healing art, is happily for the interest of the village doctors in the district, restrained within very

* A common expression among the Welsh, when speaking of the inhabitants of any other part, separated from them by a tract of very hilly land, or mountains. Those alluded to were the Pencamawr, Twyn Barlwm, and others, which lie between this place and the town of Usk, so that he was probably a native of the more central, or northern parts of Monmouthshire.

moderate

moderate limits. It is only during the night before the revel, or wake, held in the burying ground, by the country people, on Trinity Thursday, (an ancient custom, established in honour of the eucharist,) that the stone possesses this power of charming away diseases. The patients are placed upon it about sun set, and are allowed to depart about five or six o'clock on the following morning, being then assured that its miraculous virtues cease, and that the sick have derived all the benefit they can possibly receive from this act of superstition. We may conceive the number of poor deluded people, who formerly paid their devotions to this grave-stone, was very great: of late years even, so many as two and twenty persons, including both sexes, adults and children, have been known to lie either upon the stone, or the pavement round it, and in some manner touching it: a leg or an arm lying in contact with it, being thought sufficient to work the cure when the case is not

very desperate *. For the five preceding wakes this stone had been neglected, when the ceremony was revived last summer †, in the instance adduced already.—Some time about, or rather before the middle of the last century, as I was told, a gentleman of this part of Monmouthshire, *Squire Van* of Lanwern, exerted his best endeavours to suppress this silly custom. With that view he forbade the meeting of the peasantry in the Church on the eve of Trinity thursday, and to ensure implicit obedience to his commands, ordered the doors to be securely locked, that no one should obtain admittance. This was per-

* Mr. Strange speaks of sixteen as being the greatest number known to have lain upon this stone: stating also at the same time, that the ceremony takes place on the eve of the *Ascension*. Mr. Coxe, perhaps abiding on his authority, repeats the same. Mr. Gough, in the last edition of Camden, speaks to the like effect, and by Mr. Williams, in his history of Monmouthshire, it is implicitly followed also. But after all, the assertion of Mr. Strange is not correct, nor is that of Mr. Barber, who names the eve of the *Circumcision*, instead of the Ascension. It is positively believed by the country people, that there is no other time in the year, except the night before Trinity thursday, in which the grave-stone in question is possessed of any supernatural influence.

† 1803.

formed

formed accordingly, when, marvellous to relate, at the hour of midnight the bells began ringing of themselves, and continued to alarm the whole country with their deep, incessant peals, till the dawn of morning, after which they ceased. The delinquent, fully convinced that he had acted against the will of Heaven, from this awful warning, could not possibly believe that any wicked rogue had secreted himself in the Church to play the trick upon him, but expressing a due sense of his contrition for the offence, protested he would never more be accessary, in any manner, to the abolition of this tolerated practice.—Whether the fear of another midnight salutation of the bells, or some more serious prank of the invisible agents busy on that occasion, has been dreaded in latter days, or not, is doubtful: the fact is certain, that the people have never been prevented from assembling in the Church for the pious purpose beforementioned since the belfry resounded so loudly in its vindication.

There are several persons of the Roman Catholic persuasion among the lower orders in this district, who have at least the credit of promoting this extraordinary act of devotion.

The superficial manner in which this stone has been mentioned by Mr. Strange, excites a smile. "Though the Latin inscription, (says that writer) appears little defaced, yet it is far from intelligible, and seems rather in a barbarous style, agreeable to the time to which it refers; and which appears to be the year 1300. The design of the Cross on the stone, though rather clumsy, does not want invention, and is proportionally far superior in point of taste and execution to the two remaining figures." The inscription he does not even presume to explain, and truly, in the delineation of it annexed to this description, the characters are barbarous indeed *.

Later travellers, confiding in this account,

* Vide Archæologia, v. 5, p. 78.

have

Vol. I. p. 189.

+ hic · iacent · Johannes
Colmer et Isabella uxor eius · qui obierunt
anno domini : mcc
lxxxviii cuius animabus propitietur deus · amen

COLMER'S GRAVE STONE.

London: Published as the Act directs by J. Carter May 1. 1784.

have expressed themselves to the like effect: one, especially, informs us, "he shall not attempt to decypher its barbarous characters;" another "dares not hazard a literal transcript, as two gentlemen of celebrated genius, have materially varied in their description;"—according to Camden it runs in these words: *Hic jacent Johannes Colmar et Isabella uxor ejus qui obierunt Anno Domini* 1376, *quum aibus ppicetur Deus Amen.*—Mr. Coxe reads it differently, namely, *Hic jacent Johannes ..... et Elizabetha uxor ejus, qui obierunt Anno Domini* M.CCC.LXXVI. *quorum animabus miseretur Deus Amen.*

The inscription, though rather mutilated, is not, in my idea, so mysterious as to admit of these and some other equally contradictory readings, nor are the letters so rudely cut as to deserve the epithet of *barbarous*, with which they have been perpetually branded. They are, on the contrary, in a tolerable fair

gothic character*, and so far legible at this day, as to authorize a third reading, rather different from the preceding, and with the exception of a letter, conformable to that of Camden,—namely, *Hic jacent Johannes Colmer et Isabella uxor ejus qui obierunt anno domini* M.CCCLXXVI. *quorum animabus propicietur Deus Amen.*

The outline figures of John Colmer, and his wife Isabella, in the dress of the time in which they lived, are traced one on each side of the flowery cross: these devout persons are believed to have been very liberal benefactors to this Church, a suggestion that probably needs no other confirmation than the sanctity of their memory, and religious honours bestowed in after-times upon their tomb.

* These characters agree very nearly in structure with that species of middle gothic, which resembles the German character; being the same as was in use about the fifteenth and sixteenth century in France; some say later. At all events it is superior to the gothic in common use much before that time. The present stone may have been placed here in the sixteenth century, since the form of the letters would rather incline me to think it not of such an early date as the year 1376.

Another

Another grave-stone with a crucifix, lies in the pavement near the former, bearing the date 1745. A small black mural tablet, also, placed against the wall on the north side of the communion table, attracted notice: this is to the memory of Phœlix Van, wife of Thomas Van, who died at the age of fifty-four, on the 1st of May, 1613. The Vans or Vannes are a respectable family, that have been settled many years in this part of the country.

Christ Church is a spacious edifice, in the gothic stile, the interior of which was formerly very richly ornamented with carved work, and other decorations; traces of which are yet perceptible. In the burying ground are two or three table monuments, on each of which the form of the Cross may be observed; the inscriptions are illegible through the incrustations of lichens that thickly overspread them.

Beyond the little village of Christ Church, the

the road passes down a steep hill, and at the end of a journey of about two miles, conducts to the town of Newport.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Newport,—its Bridge, Town,—Castle and History.—St. Woolos Church,—Twyn Gwnlliw, or Tomb of St. Woolos,—Ancient Monuments within the Church.—Tredegar.—Castletown.—Prospects towards the Sea.——St. Melon's.—Kelp, a maritime Production of Utility.—Inland Views.—Boundary of South Wales.

AS our horses descended slowly over a pretty steep declivity, which the road presents at some distance to the eastward of Newport, we caught a pleasing view of that town and neighbourhood.—Newport rises boldly upon the opposite bank of the Usk, and is seen from this point to uncommon advantage, ascending the elevated sweep of land, that partly skirts and overlooks the river: St. Woolos

Woolos Church, surrounded by a few trees, crests the loftiest part of the hill.

The entrance into the town on this side, is highly creditable. We pass over a noble stone bridge of five arches towards it, which must be considered as a vast improvement upon the old timber edifice it superseded a short time since: the period of its completion, with some other particulars relating to it, we are apprised of, by an inscriptive stone in the parapet above the central arch, which contains the following words: "This bridge was erected at the expence of the county, by DAVID EDWARDS, and his two sons, WILLIAM EDWARDS and THOMAS EDWARDS. Completed in the year 1800."—Most likely this was not accomplished before the winter; the parapet at least, remained in an unfinished state about the latter end of the summer, in the year above-mentioned.

Report says, this bridge was originally undertaken

dertaken by Mr. Edwards, for the comparatively small sum of ten thousand pounds; but before the whole was executed, the real expences of labour and materials, exceeded that estimate by several thousands more. Such, we were assured, to be the fact, and still further, that the gentlemen of the county, much to their honour, not only released the architect from the conditions of his contract, but remunerated him for the extra expences, and after all, very liberally rewarded his assiduity and skill, for having finished it so ably to their satisfaction. Of this useful structure, it need be only said, the design is plain, and the workmanship substantial. An unpleasant effect arises, in my opinion, from the gloomy aspect of the Charston stone, with which it is constructed, at the same time, that in point of œconomy, I am aware, this defect, (if any it can be considered,) is more than compensated by the durability of that material: the only objection that ought in candour to be urged against it, is the disproportion that

prevails

prevails between the length and breadth of the carriage way, which is assuredly too narrow.

The passage across the river in this place, was anciently protected by a formidable castle of Norman architecture, the threatening front of whose aged ruin is still an ornament to this side of the town.—I recollect, the first time we rode over the unfinished bridge, the *tout ensemble* of the town, guarded by this august castle, brought to mind the artless lines of our old favourite poet. The apparent fidelity of the picture he has drawn of Newport in his day, may be still appreciated: the propriety of his remarks struck us forcibly, and for my own part, I could not hesitate in admitting, with my fellow traveller, that if we except the more ruinous state of the castle, and the bridge, which had been recently building, the effusion of this rhymer, whilst it displays the whimsical prevailing taste of the age in which he lived, is neither destitute of fancy nor correctness; and is even now, in a certain measure,

measure, applicable to the characteristic aspect of the place.

" A towne nere this, that buylt is all a length,
Cal'd Newport now, there is full fayre to viewe:
Which seate doth stand, for profite more than strength,
A right strong bridge, is there of timber newe:
A river runnes, full nere the castle walle:
Nere Church likewise, a mount behold you shall,
Where sea and land, to sight so plaine appeeres,
That there men see, a part of five fayre sheeres.
As upward hye, aloft to mountaine top,
This market towne is buylt in healthfull sort;
So downward loe, is many a marchants shop,
And many sayle, to Bristowe from that port.
Of auncient tyme, a city hath it bin
And in those daies, the castle hard to win
Which yet shewes fayre and is repayrd a parte
As things decayd, must needs be helpt by arte."

The interior of the town, however, disappointed us. Most of the houses are very mean, the streets ill paved, and what is worse, remarkably dirty. Newport arose in consequence, on the decay of Caerleon, being stationed more conveniently for trade, and lying some miles nearer to the Bristol Channel than the latter; but in its turn, Newport has given place

place to Cardiff, of which it is at this time considered only as a subordinate port.

After strolling for an hour or two about the town, the beauty of the day invited us again to the banks of the Usk, to observe the scenery it affords, with more regard than we had been at liberty to appropriate to it as we entered the town. The views upon the river near the town, either above or below the bridge, are rather confined, and in other respects, less remarkable for their grandeur, than our sanguine fancy had anticipated. One which unfolds itself, indeed, from the eastern curvature of the shore, I thought not unworthy of the walk to survey it. Here the castle becomes a grand and impressive accompanyment to the breadth of water ripling in in the front; the bridge and shipping, with a scanty burst of landscape beyond it, completing the interesting picture.

Newport town was once strongly fortified. Vestiges

Vestiges of the walls, and three gateways, existed, according to Leland, about the close of the sixteenth century. The situation of the gateways on the east and west sides of the town, might have been easily traced a few years ago; the latter in particular, was not demolished till very lately. At this time the shell of the old castle is the principal, if not the only remnant, of the fortifications remaining, by which the town was formerly protected. The principal front of this building, as before suggested, rises upon a low bank close to the river, which on this side bathes its walls at every returning flood. This front, or wing of the building, consists of three equidistant towers, that are connected by two intermediate curtain walls; the central tower, supposed to have been the citadel, is of a square form, flanked with little turrets: those at each corner of the wall are smaller, and octangular. The whole is built with rubble stones, having the corners coined with squares of whitish free-stone.

Entering the area of the castle, we found it in a miserable state of dilapidation; a circumstance by no means expected, the external front facing the river, being in a tolerable state of repair, and the appearance of one or two glazed windows, peeping through the farthest of its towers, naturally leading to a conclusion, that the castle must be inhabited. The space within the walls is converted into a tan yard, and such of the apartments as are entire in the eastern wing, where the windows had been observed, are transformed into store-rooms and stables.

As the key of these apartments could not be readily obtained, the state-room in the square tower escaped our inspection; the baronial hall, another noble apartment on the north side of it, was shewn us: we also noticed the sally-port conducting down to the river, a fine gothic arch once defended by gates and a portcullis, the grooves of which are very discernible.—Mr. Grose acquaints

quaints us, that "Newport Castle was erected for the defence of the passage over the river, towards which it has three strong towers, but towards the town, only a common wall, without flanks or defences." "It is in figure, (adds that writer,) a right angled parallelogram, measuring about forty-six yards by thirty-two; the greatest length running from north to south, or in a direction parallel to the course of the river."—In the first of these assertions, Mr. Grose is evidently mistaken; the castle was protected on the land side by a very deep moat, which proves beyond a doubt, that this fortress was not built merely to protect the passage across the river, as it must have been equally capable of being defended on that side next the town. A grand gateway, in the prevailing gothic style of the building, appears on the north side opening to the moat, the communication between which and the bank directly opposite, was formerly maintained, no doubt, by means of a drawbridge. The excavation it bestrided, is still very

wide and deep, comprising within its limits a group of cottages, with little gardens attached to each; together with a carpenter's yard and workshop: the original purpose of this excavation is obvious, the bottom in which the above-mentioned cluster of cottages appears, retaining at this time the significant appellation of the castle-moat. Its course may be pursued from hence along the western wall, although on that side it has been partially filled up with the mud, discharged into it by the workmen employed in digging the new canal. To be ingenuous, I must own the credit of disproving the evidence of Mr. Grose in the first instance, does not rest with me: in the hasty glance bestowed upon this ruinous castle the first time we passed through Newport, we were led by its specious appearance into the very same opinion ourselves. What Mr. Coxe advanced upon the subject in the interval of time, awakened some mistrust in my own mind, and determined me to revisit the castle the next time we should

chance

chance to pass through the town, and examine its fortifications on the land side, with more attention than before: under the influence of this motive, we walked round the walls last summer, when the traces of the moat appeared so very visible, as to convince us the conclusions assumed by Mr. Grose, were altogether unfounded.

Newport castle may possibly claim no earlier origin than the other fortresses erected by the Normans upon the conquest of Glamorganshire; the estate of Newport being included in those days within the lordship of that county, and falling to the share of Fitzhamon, the leader of those Normans who conquered it. That this castle was either built by him, or one of the English lords who immediately succeeded him, is neither improbable, nor unlikely; the style of building, and of the pointed arches especially, countenance the opinion of its being erected in that age. The voice of common fame attri-

butes it to Robert, the earl of Glocester and Bristol, the natural son of king Henry the First, who acquired the town of Newport, with other possessions, by his marriage with Maud the daughter of Fitzhamon.

In the year 1172, Newport was possessed by William, the son of Robert, at which time there was certainly a castle here, garrisoned with English forces; for this garrison, as Caradoc relates, were guilty of the treacherous murder of Owen, the son of Jorwerth, a powerful chieftain among the Welsh. The story is interesting, and if the testimony of this historian deserves our credit, an act so flagrant, cruel, and unprovoked, must reflect a lasting shame upon the memory of its perpetrators; the substance of the event alluded to, is simply this.—Henry the Second, king of England, being on his return home, after an unsuccessful expedition against Ireland, landed near Pembroke, where he was sumptuously entertained; then taking his departure

ture from that place, proceeded on his journey homewards through South Wales. Rhys, the prince of that district through which the route of the king was intended, having heard that he was on his journey, hastened to meet him, with every demonstration of duty and allegiance due to Henry, whom he acknowledged for his lawful sovereign. Rhys, as he expected, being well received by the king, accompanied him on his way towards the English frontiers. Henry was anxious to know the political state of the country from Rhys, and learning, among other particulars, that the only leader of any note among the Welsh at open enmity with his authority at that time, was Jorwerth ap Owen ap Caradoc, the king expressed a wish to have him sent for, in order to enquire into the nature of his complaints, conceiving, by the influence of his presence, matters might be brought to a better understanding, and the country be left to enjoy the blessings of tranquility

The king continuing his journey, passed on from Cardiff by the "New Castle upon Usk:" then sending for Jorwerth, directed his messenger to acquaint him of his sincere desire to restore peace, and to assure him of perfect safety for himself, his sons, and associates, who might think proper to come and treat with him for that purpose.—No sooner was this welcome intelligence brought to Jorwerth, who began to dread the superior power of his enemy, than he resolved to accede to any reasonable terms of accommodation, and with this view set out to meet the English king. But previously to this, Jorwerth dispatched an express to his son Owen, desiring him to come to him upon the road. Owen, in conformity with his father's orders, hastened forward with a small retinue, who were so well assured of the king's protection, that they thought it needless to encumber themselves with arms, which might retard their journey. This exactly suited the dastard purposes of their inveterate enemy, the earl of Bristol, whose

whose soldiers being apprized of their errand and intended route, were in waiting to receive them, and as they passed the castle, rushed out to attack them. Owen was killed upon the spot with most of his followers, a few only escaping to carry back the heavy tidings to his father. The consequence of such rash and aggravated conduct towards a chieftain, powerful, and independent, such as Jorwerth, may be conceived; the haughty Cambrian would hearken to no more professions of amity, but raising all the forces he could muster, entered England, destroying with fire and sword the country and inhabitants, to the very gates of Hereford and Gloucester.

After the death of William the earl of Gloucester, in 1173, Newport devolved to Richard de Clare, earl of Hertford; by marriage with the second daughter of William. In the reign of Edward the Second it belonged to Hugh le Despencer, and seems to have been his place of residence at the time the earl of

Hertford

Hertford and other nobles confederated against him, were ravaging his extensive possessions with such a powerful force that he durst not oppose them *.

Newport, with the castle and dependencies, fell in after times into the possession of Stafford, the earl of Buckingham. In 1645, the castle itself is stated to have been in ruins, belonging at that time to the earl of Pembroke. The Herberts of St. Julian's, the earl of Powis, and other distinguished families, are named among the number of those who possessed it afterwards. At present we learn the property is divided, one portion of it appertaining, by a recent purchase, to the marquis of Worcester; and William Kemys, of Maundee, being proprietor of the remainder.

* In the petition of Despencer on this occasion to the King in parliament, which is still preserved, the preamble sets forth, that Newport castle, with those of Cardiff, Caerphilly, Llantriessant, Talnams, Llanblethian, Kenfig, Neath, Drusselan, and Dinevawr, were plundered and burnt by the earl of Hereford, Roger Mortimer and his nephew, with divers other great personages, confederated against them, at the head of 800 men at arms, 500 hobelers, and 10,000 foot soldiers.

Our

Our walks in the environs of Newport last summer, notwithstanding the unfavourable haziness of the weather, was agreeably diversified with a more extensive survey of the surrounding country, than in any former instance. To the old Church of St. Woolos, we also paid due attention. This curious time-worn pile of building, had never failed to interest us in passing out of the town: more than once we had proposed even to bestow an hour to the inspection of it, but having invariably found one difficulty or another arise in our endeavours to obtain admission into the interior, through the absence of the clerk, the design had been as often laid aside. Perceiving by mere accident, a mason at work under the door porch, the last time we passed through the church yard, we embraced the opportunity it afforded, and walked into the building.—I had been anxious to ascend the lofty turret of this Church, to enjoy the delightful prospects over the adjacent country which it so eminently commands. This we accom-

accomplished, though not without trouble; the winding staircase leading to its battlements, after reaching a certain height, being at best in a very indifferent state of repair; but having gained the summit, we were amply recompenced for the extraordinary exertion requisite in the ascent, by the rich variety of prospects that were at once unveiled before us. The ruder lineaments they exhibit, are not materially dissimilar to those we had been partially gratified with, in traversing the turnpike road, when the eye chanced to wander towards the southward; but including, as we had naturally anticipated, from this elevated spot, an infinitely wider range of scenery, the whole becomes more copious, diversified, and enchanting. The pervading density of the atmosphere obscured our remoter horizon, but fancy was not idle; for we may easily conceive the prodigious extent of prospects which burst upon the view of the astonished spectator from this exalted station when the weather is serene. The romantic undula-

undulations of the Usk, roving between its verdant banks in its progress towards the sea, is comprised in the nearer view: the bridge, the castle, and town of Newport, lies immediately below; in the distance also, the channel is distinctly seen, as a pale and silvery streak of waters, bounding the intervening tract of low lands, that arrange themselves for miles in one continued level to the southward. The latter we could not refrain from admiring, the ruddy plains they disclosed, enamelled with luxuriant vegetation, decorated with hamlets, a scanty sprinkling of cottages, of rural Churches, and other chaste embellishments, rendering this portion of the landscape before us, highly beautiful and attractive.

After remaining upon the lofty battlements of the Church for a while, in the hope that a momentary gleam of sun-shine would dart through the bursting clouds, to irradiate and disclose the distant scenery to some advantage, a brisk shower, succeeded by a heavy rain,

rain, compelled us to seek a shelter. Accordingly we descended the old staircase that had conducted us thither, and having reached the bottom, again walked round St. Mary's Chapel, that portion of the Church at which we first entered.

This Chapel is of a later date than the original edifice dedicated to St. Woolos: neither the decorations, nor the style of building, with the exception of an ornamented doorway, merit any observation; it is at present in use only as a burial place.—At the time we visited this spot, I am sorry to say the strictest attention to propriety in one respect was not observable within these walls; we were repeatedly shocked in proceeding towards the eastern extremity of the place, with the mouldering relics of mortality, the wreck of bones, skulls, and coffins, that were heedlessly scattered about the ground on which we trod. —To attach reproach where it may be undeserving, is far from my intention; the occasion

sion of the irregularity complained of, was not accurately known to us; it seemed to arise from negligence, and we regretted only that negligence should sanction such procedure.—As to the dissolution of this corporeal frame, the glorious prospects of eternity, teach us to behold it without dismay. To dust we must return; such is the will of the great Author of our being; the decree is sealed, and irrevocable; but can the neglect of moral decency, or rather this impiety, admit apology from this consideration?—Are our feelings to be extinguished when the objects of our solicitude descend into the grave?—Are the endearing ties of fond affection, of esteem, of reverence, of all the social virtues to be dissolved, when they they quit this transitory scene of life; or when their bodies are consigned to the "narrow dwelling" of the sepulchre?—Surely not;—It is compatible with the liveliest hopes of Christian piety: consistent with the tenderest duties imposed upon the heart of man, that they still live in memory, that the tear

of

of sympathy bedew their grave, that their remains be sacred.—There is a respectful conduct due towards these relics of the departed, that deeply interests the feeling mind; that speaks eloquence to the very soul when thus offended:—

—" E'en from the grave the voice of nature cries,
" E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires."

GRAY.

St. Mary's Chapel communicates with that part of the Church in which divine service is performed, by means of a pair of folding doors, beneath a portal that displays a fine example of the Anglo-Norman, or Saxon style of architecture. The arch is a bold semicircle of large dimensions, richly ornamented with a peculiar kind of indented zigzag mouldings; on each side of the porch is a low slender column, bearing a foliated capital, upon which the arch is supported.—Formerly this was the grand western entrance to the Church.

The interior of the main building is spacious;

cious; the style Anglo-Norman or Saxon, simple and substantial. A certain intermixture of the gothic denotes the later repairs it has undergone. One circumstance in particular is striking, the nave is separated from the side ailes by a colonade of pillars of a clumsy structure, the capitals of which are an artless attempt at ornament, the arches arising from them are bold and heavy, one or two of which are pointed, but the rest are semicircular.

On the floor of the chancel near the south wall, lies an effegiated grave-stone, apparently of some dignified ecclesiastic of early times, which the mason (whom we discovered to be a native of the town) desired us to observe, as being the figure of Gwnlliw, or St. Woolos, who lies buried in this place. I reminded our informant, that whatever might be the popular notion of the country people, this was most likely not the fact, since there is a spot near the Church, which from time immemorial has been called *Twyn Gwnlliw*, or the tomb of St.

Woolos, in which it is traditionally believed the remains of that reputed saint were deposited long before the Church was built.—Mr. Harris, we recollect, dissents from this vulgar opinion, considering the spot denominated *Twyn Gwnlliw*, as an *arx speculatoria*, or watch tower of the Romans, in conformity with the ideas he had conceived, that the present Church and burying ground occupies the scite of a Roman fortification. St. Woolos was a princely penitent, who led a life of hermitical retirement in this part of the country, during the first ages of Christianity.

Directly against the wall on the same side, is an altar monument, with a recumbent figure of an armed knight, lying beneath a plain canopy supported by pillars. The workmanship is not amiss; from the fashion of the armour, and ruff round the neck, it is presumed to be commemorative of some distinguished individual who lived about the time of queen Elizabeth, but, as in the former instance,

instance, every trace of an inscription is obliterated.—A large mural monument, inscribed to the memory of Nehemiah Williams, Esq. Mayor of the town, who died in the beginning of the last century, is placed opposite to this.

There are in this Church the broken remnants of two other monuments that ought not to be forgotten. One is the mutilated image of a knight in armour, distinguished by a sash or garter S, with a graceful female figure by his side; both of these are decapitated. From the style of their habiliments, this may be of the fifteenth century. A marble slab, ornamented with a gothic design of arches, figures, and heraldic entablatures stands near these figures, and seems to have been part of the same monument; the arms emblazoned on the shield, is not correctly known, and there is no other means of ascertaining the persons for whom these figures were intended.

The other is the portion of a whole length figure, which we perceived by accident in the

 dirty

dirty recess with the former, laying on the south side of the Church between the pews and the wall; and where we suspect it has long remained concealed from the cognizance of the passing stranger. This is indisputably the remains of some ancient sepulchral memorial of no mean importance: nothing, I believe, is known as to the person it is designed to represent: but the æra of time in which he flourished, I think we may be able to determine, after considering the figure with attention, notwithstanding that its mutilated condition seems at first sight to preclude the possibility of offering any correct opinion concerning it. The solitary fragment in question, consists of the headless trunk of a man in armour, having the right arm struck off near the shoulder; all the lower parts below the *hawberk*, including the legs and knees, are likewise wanting. I am, for my own part, inclined to refer this figure to the earliest Norman æra: there is such a striking similarity between the costume of this, and some other

other effegiated monuments of that time, which are allowed to be authentic, that I cannot hesitate in believing it to be of the same early date. The armour beneath the *gambeson*, or vest, is of that kind called suit of mail, harness, or not unfrequently chain armour, being like a chain composed of rings linked into each other: these were usually of iron, very small, and gilt, and as every ring was interlinked with five others, the whole formed a suit of armour of such surprising flexibility, as to accommodate itself to any motion of the wearer's body.—This kind of mail, or harness, with the vest above-mentioned, it is to be remembered, was first introduced into England by the Normans, under William the Conqueror. We also know, that with various modifications, it continued to be in use for several centuries after the conquest; nor was it neglected in certain parts of the warriors dress long after the whole suit of mail was laid aside in favour of that formed of plates, a striking proof of which occurs in the monu-

mental figure of Sir Rhys ap Thomas, who lived in the reign of Henry the Seventh, and now lies in the Church of Caermarthen. But at different periods the costume of the warrior's habiliments, in which the chain, or mail armour was introduced, had undergone those transitions which mark progressively, and with tolerable precision, the time to which they should be respectively referred.—The figure under consideration, exhibits nearly the same appearance as that of Roger de Montgomery, preserved in the Abbey Church of Shrewsbury: the similarity is certainly striking; we observe in both the same sort of closely fitted suit of mail next the body; the same loose robe thrown over the back and shoulders, and even the sash across the breast, and sword belt are alike. The effigy of Montgomery is supposed to represent him in the very dress in which he fought under the Conqueror in the memorable battle of Hastings. Montgomery appears to have been rather a taller man than this knight *incognito*, and his shield, although of the same angulated form, is longer in proportion;

portion; but this is of little moment to our induction; uniformity in this respect, we are convinced, was disregarded; of which an instance in point occurs in the incumbent figure of another Norman knight of that time, Paganus de Turberville, or of his son in Ewenny Priory.—Upon the whole, I am persuaded, we may with much propriety ascribe this neglected fragment to the very same remote period. That it formed a part of some magnificent monument, need not be disputed; one most likely erected to the memory of a Norman, or English baron of the eleventh century. Perhaps, even it might have been designed to commemorate one of the earliest possessors of Newport Castle after Fitzhamon's conquest; and who may lie buried in the Church, although neither history nor tradition has preserved the slightest recollection of such a circumstance.

Nothing further, arresting our attention in the Church of St. Woolos, we took leave

of Newport, and pursued the usual route from thence to Cardiff.

At about two miles beyond Newport, we passed through the noble grounds of the Tredegar estate, the turnpike road immediately intersecting and dividing them into two parts, one of which is denominated the old, and the other the new Park. The mansion, a large substantial brick building, in the heavy style of Charles the First's reign, is situated at a little distance to the left of the main road, upon a low, expansive lawn, watered by the crystaline stream of the Ebwy, and finely ornamented in the back ground with trees of a noble growth: as to the disposition of the trees in the extensive level before the house, less must be said in commendation, the peculiar formality of their arrangement is by no means pleasing to the eye of those accustomed to delight in the artless simplicity of nature.

Tredegar is in the possession of Sir Charles Morgan, Bart. who by marriage with the female line of the Morgan's of this estate, is become the representative of one of the most ancient families at this time extant. Modern writers seem to agree that *Cadivor ap Cedvan*, who flourished in the year 1108, was their great ancestor.—The celebrity of this house among the early Welsh, was very great. Their hospitality to the bards, still "lives in song," and the bards were not ungrateful: despising the trammels of authority, or record, written or traditional, to flatter their pride of ancestry, some of them did not hesitate to trace the descent of this line of the Morgans, down to *Cam*, the son of *Noah!* Others, with more prudent forbearance, would presume, indeed, to descend no further than Beli, who flourished some ages before the time of Christ. Caractacus, and other distinguished characters whom the bards of remoter days held in the highest estimation, have

have been also named as the parent source from which they sprang.

Last summer, the long projected scheme of cutting a canal through the north side of Tredegar Park, was finally put in execution, and thus the beauty of this agreeable spot, is in a certain measure sacrificed to the convenience of the neighbourhood. A canal and rail road, in an unfinished state, had also attracted notice between Newport and Tredegar, the latter of which had been undertaken with the view of facilitating the communications with the mining works, and various other concerns of utility and importance, carried on in the upper part of the country.

Some charming breaks of vale and woodland scenery occasionally intervene upon the road to Cardiff. There is one of singular beauty, deserving mention, in which a little extent of country is seen smiling in all the pride of rural neatness.

neatness. The distance is closed by an appropriate boundary of hills: the Church of Basileg rears its aged front in one point of the view among the trees: a few whitened cottages are also visible, and the whole landscape produces an effect of mild, of simple, and unaffected beauty.

Castletown is a small village that derives its name from an old castle erected here by the Normans, the whole of which is said to have been long since demolished. This place we hastily passed through, about two miles to the westward of Tredegar, and shortly after ascended towards St. Melon's.

Here the road creeps over a bold, but gradual swell of land, from whence a prospect of prodigious extent broke unexpectedly upon our sight. The tract of country which this hill commands, laid widely stretched below in the loveliest attire of pasturage and culture, umbrageous woods, the sea, and distant hills.

The

—The first time this scene was unveiled before us, the whole was brilliantly illuminated with the splendour of a most glorious morning sun; it struck us unexpectedly, and for the moment, it must be acknowledged, I thought I had rarely seen an open, placid prospect, worthy of being placed in competition with it;—but we had then explored the principality of Wales.—The features of the picture presented at the first glance, may be faintly sketched in a few words. Within the limits of our view, lay widely exposed a part of the marshy lands of Wentloog level; beyond this the Bristol Channel, bounded by the hazy shores of Somerset, assumed a majestic character: two little islets, the steep-holm and the flat-holm, opportunely rise above its tremulous expanse of waters, then streaked with gold, with green, and reflecting the æthereal azure of an almost unclouded firmament. In the distance a few vessels were also seen hoisting their unavailing sails; not a breath of air disturbing the repose of nature, the calm

calm serenity that reigned throughout.—Proceeding onwards, the smoke arising from the burning kelp along the shore, and two or three glass-houses on the coast of Somerset, contributed, in some degree, to diversify this expansive landscape.

It cannot be unworthy of mention, that the properties, and in consequence the value, of that useful article, the kelp, remained a secret to the inhabitants of the maritime parts of Wales, till within the space of the last twenty or thirty years. At this time the kelp is become an object of emolument to the landholders, and at certain times of the year, furnishes employ for a number of the peasantry who reside upon the sea coast.

Kelp is the spontaneous product of all our rocky coasts. In Scotland, and in Ireland, these marine plants have been used with success both in the process of bleaching, and in the manufactory of glass; for the latter purpose it

it is highly useful, and were it not for a particular tinge of yellow, which it is apt to leave on the finer sorts of linen, would be of more consequence to the bleacher, than the glass-maker.—The mode of collecting and preparing kelp in the first instance, is simply this: the people rake it together in heaps, kindle a fire, and roast it on the sands to ashes.—Formerly the kelp thus prepared was very cheap, being sold for about forty or fifty shillings per ton, but it will fetch at present a much greater price.—On the Somerset coast, in one place we could distinctly perceive the turrets of two furnaces, near each other, which had been constructed, as we were told, for the purpose of making glass; chiefly of the ordinary kinds, such as green flint bottles, &c. in which the kelp is employed.—The marine plants known by the trivial name of kelp, include the various common species of the *Fucus* tribe, such as *Vesiculosus*, *serratus*, *ceranoides*, &c.

Beyond

Beyond St. Melon's, the curvature of the road discloses a variety of views upon the right, which are not altogether uninteresting. A ride of three miles beyond the former, conducted us into Rumney, a place consisting only of a few houses.—The Rumney river is a noisy, turbulent stream, that flows through the marshes to the westward of the village bearing that name: this we crossed, over an old shattered bridge of two arches, and entered the borders of South Wales:—Monmouthshire was once considered as a part of the principality, but has long since been deprived of that distinction, and is now included among the English counties.

CHAP. V.

Rumney Marshes.—Grey Friars, a ruin near the East Gate of Cardiff; the Town,—Canal,—St. John's Church,—Bridge,—Sewen, a kind of Salmon that frequents the Coast and Rivers of South Wales.—Visit to Cardiff Castle.

A Journey of two or three miles across a flat and open country, conducts to Cardiff, after passing the Rumney river; a rapid water, whose sinuous course defines the limits of Monmouthshire and Glamorgan on the eastward.

As we advanced close to the town of Cardiff, an aged ruin of monastic character, occurred to view upon the right. This stands contiguous to the high road, behind a cluster of houses that form one part of the outskirts of

RUINED MONASTIC EDIFICE
in CARDIFF.

London: Published as the Act directs by J. Throsby Sept. 1786.

of the place. Much of this edifice, which appears to have never been very large, is destroyed, one side of the shell alone remaining; but even that exhibits, with tolerable fidelity, the style of architecture which seems to have prevailed throughout the whole fabric.—I apprehend this to be the ruin described by recent tourists as the fragment of a religious house established here by one of the ancient lords of Cardiff, for the reception of a company of white, or Cistertian friars; an idea that may not be perfectly correct, since the authority of an early writer might be adduced to prove, (were it of any moment,) that this house belonged to the grey, and not to the white friars.—The passage alluded to reads thus, "Porte Crokerton *flat Est*, so caullid of the suburbe that joynith hard to it."—"The biggest suburbe of the town is caullid Crokerton, and ther was a house of gray friars *."

* Vide Leland, vol. iv. fol. 74.

The fortifications on the east side of Cardiff town were once to all appearance considerable. This conclusion, we are strongly inclined to allow, after a very cursory view of that portion of the wall which is still standing: it is of great extent, and remarkable for its thickness, and substantial masonry. The moat by which this wall was further strengthened, having been converted into a navigable canal, the original lineaments of this defence are obliterated, or at least cannot easily be perceived.—A short, though not unpleasant walk, presents itself upon the bank of this canal; one point of view we thought rather interesting: here the waters of the canal glide gently beneath the umbrageous shadow of the half-dilapidated wall, reflecting upon their glassy surface the mouldering battlements, finely overhung with trees and ivy. For the accommodation of the foot passenger, a kind of rustic bridge (a stout plank with a few hand-rails) is suspended at a considerable height

height above the water between the wall and the bank directly opposite.

Cardiff emulates the importance of one of the greatest cities of South Wales; being scarcely inferior to any of them at this time, and promising to become of far more consequence, whenever the intended improvements of the place are completed. What tends materially to promote the trade of Cardiff, is the facility with which a constant intercourse is maintained between the inhabitants, and those of the interior part of Glamorganshire, the great center of the celebrated iron works of this county. The canal communicating with Merthyr Tydvil and Aberdare, both which lie at the distance of about five and twenty miles from the Cardiff port, is an improvement of modern days. It is by means of this canal, the uninterrupted intercourse beforementioned is preserved; the produce of the interior districts being regularly brought down to Cardiff, and the imports of that town con-

veyed up the country in return. The expences attending the construction of this canal has already exceeded fifty thousand pounds; the greater part of which has been defrayed by the iron masters of Merthyr and its vicinity, whose immediate interest this noble undertaking is so peculiarly calculated to advance, by affording a speedy conveyance for the produce of their mines and forges, at an easy charge, to a convenient depot for shipping it to the respective markets. The difficulties arising in the progress of executing such a work may be conceived, when we consider the nature of the intervening country, which abounds with rocks and hills, and various other impediments which a liberal perseverance alone could overcome: an estimate, allowed to be authentic, states the level of the water to be five hundred and seventy eight feet higher at the head of the canal adjoining the *Cyfarthfa* iron works of Mr. Crashaw, than in the first lock of the canal nearest to the sea at the Cardiff port.

The

The town of Cardiff, considered as a sea port, has a remarkably neat appearance. One of the principal streets extends in a southerly direction nearly from the castle to the new quay. Adjoining the latter, a commodious range of buildings has been very recently erected, which may be justly deemed an ornament to the place: the houses appear to be chiefly, if not exclusively, in the occupation of the merchants, proprietors, and agents engaged in the commerce of the port, and especially of those connected with the mining speculations of the inland parts of the country. So far as relates to the iron trade, their concerns are evidently considerable; many thousand tons of that metal, cast into pigs and bars of various dimensions, laying at all times upon the quay for exportation. The convenience of this situation for the purpose of trade, is admirable: such is the depth of water in the locks, that vessels of large burthen may come up from the Severn sea so close to the quay to unlade, or take in

their cargoes, that the people may literally step from on board of them to the shore.

Besides the abundance of wrought iron laying about this spot, I observed in walking along the sides of the canal towards the sea, several large banks of this useful metal in an unsmelted state, of a kind entirely different from the argillaceous ore of South Wales.—This was a very beautiful variety of *hematite*, in irregular masses, coating a greyish iron, and consisting for the most part of concentric layers, the upper surfaces of which were either granulated or tuberculated, and covered with a delicate soft down, not unlike the pile of the finest velvet: the colour a rich and changeable reddish brown, soft to the touch, brittle, and exhibiting when broken, a striated fracture.—A variety of iron ore, not dissimilar to this, we had seen before from Lancashire, but by no means so elegant: conceiving it might be, therefore, the product of a neighbouring mine, we were induced

duced to make enquiry concerning it, in the course of which we learnt, that several cargoes of this ore had been brought hither by a Lancashire trader, for the use of the tin plate manufactory about four miles off.—Great quantities of limestone is burnt near this spot, part of which is brought from Pennarth point, a projecting headland that juts into the sea at the distance of two or three miles across an arm of the Severn opposite Cardiff. The stones procured from thence, which I inspected, were of a close grain, the colour blueish, and replete with extraneous fossils of the testaceous tribes. *Petrified snakes*, as the labourers term them, the Ammonite shells, they told us, are not unfrequent in the rocks about Pennarth. The cast of a Chama incrusted with pyrites, a singularly escalloped ostrea, and two or three other curious shells I had the good chance to extricate from the stone, and thus rescued them from the destructive flames of the lime kiln, to which they were about to be consigned.—

Larnoc, or Larnog hill, a mile to the westward of Pennarth point, abounds particularly with those remains of animal matter.

The elegant tower of St. John's Church, which forms a conspicuous feature in the distant view of the town, is seen from Cardiff Port to the north east. This building, on a nearer inspection, appears to be an edifice of great simplicity: the body of the Church is usually referred to the thirteenth century, but the tower is an addition of a much later date, and is deservedly admired for the peculiar style, and excellent open work of the battlements.—This is the only Church in Cardiff. In early times there was another belonging to this place, which stood near the Taeffe river, and was dedicated to St. Mary: this was overthrown, and in a great measure washed away by the dreadful inundation that happened on this coast in the year 1607.

Among the various improvements bestowed of

of late years upon this town, the handsome stone bridge across the Taeffe, is not of the smallest consequence, adding, as it certainly does, to the beauty as well as the convenience of the place. This was finished in the year 1794, at a great expence.—Leland complains in his time, that "the water of Taphe cummith so down from woody hilles, and often bringeth such logges and trees, that the countery wer not able to make up the bridges if they wer of stone they should be so often broken." Mr. Parry, the architect, had no such impediments to encounter in his attempt: the country through which the river bends its course, has been long since so completely despoiled of those extensive woods which formerly clothed their hills, that the people of Cardiff need entertain no serious alarm at this time for the fate of their bridge from this source of danger.

Cardiff boasts a very remote antiquity. "It was, (says one writer,) known to the Romans

Romans by the name of Rhatostabius Ostium, and Aulus Didius raised a fort here soon after the Roman invasion in the first century, to keep the Silures in subjection." On the authority of this historic trait, we are further told, that the Cambrians first called it Caer-didi, or the fort of Didus, which in the course of ages degenerated into Caer-taffe, and finally to Cardiff. Others, with greater probability, derive the name from its situation on the bank of the river Taeffe.—Meurich, a king, or chieftain of Glamorganshire, the reputed father of the celebrated Arthur, historians say, was born at Cardiff. It is asserted likewise, that many distinguished persons resided in this place long before the conquest of the country by the Normans.—However this may be, we are to believe that Cardiff owes to the last event the foundation of its present consequence. A town appears to have been built here, or a former one improved, at the same time that the castle was erected by Fitzhamon, the leader of the Norman knights by whom this conquest

conquest was accomplished. It was fixed upon for his usual place of residence, and was endowed with certain privileges and immunities which it would not otherwise have obtained. In those days of warfare there can be little doubt of Fitzhamon having placed it in a respectable state of defence; such as he deemed capable of withstanding the hostile attacks of his restless neighbours the Welsh, who were by no means inclined to bow with implicit obedience to the dominion of their conqueror. The castle is unanimously attributed to Fitzhamon: perhaps he erected also those walls, by which the town was surrounded in latter times. Leland speaks of these, and of five gates which were standing in Henry the Eighth's reign; and part of these remain in proof of his assertion, even in the present day. The circumference of the town within the walls was estimated at a mile.

The influx of strangers to Cardiff during the summer months, is astonishingly great,

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as may be conceived from the large proportion of lodging houses in the town: nor can the travelling business of the place be inconsiderable, since that alone supports two large inns upon an extensive scale, besides several smaller houses of public accommodation. No people in the Principality know better how to profit by the liberality, or rather the credulity of strangers than the Cardiff inn-keepers; they have little of that courtesy by which this description of people are so uniformly distinguished in other Welsh towns; and when the place is pretty full of company, which often happens in the summer, we have commonly found that their extortion could be only paralleled by their incivility.—"I suppose you are a stranger to Cardiff," said one of the servants of the Angel inn, with a supercilious air not easily described, when I once complained that a guinea was certainly too much for a very indifferent bed, with which my hostess had accommodated me in an adjacent house for the preceding night.—"Surely, (I made answer,

answer,) although such a sum may be given during the time of the races, or the assizes, that cannot be a customary charge."—" Not a constant charge, I grant," replied the girl, " but a common one when the town is very full of company, I assure you."

In the summer of the year 1800, an opportunity offered itself to me, for the first time, of inspecting in this town the celebrated *sewen* or *sewin* of South Wales, a particular kind of salmon of a very excellent flavour, and which by many is esteemed superior even to the common salmon. Previous to our morning's ramble about the place, we had ordered dinner at the Cardiff hotel, and were unexpectedly served at table on our return with a dish of this delicate fish in high perfection. But we afterwards observed the fishermen taking them in vast numbers in their nets, as they ascended from the sea along the Taeffe river to the southward of the bridge. The sewen is of the migratory kind, appearing on the

the sea coasts, and in the rivers of South Wales, during the summer months, or from May till September; at which season no fish is taken here in greater plenty. We are willing to allow the sewen to be an object of some small curiosity. The Welsh pride themselves not a little in the supposition of its being peculiar to the Cambrian Principality, or rather to South Wales alone, and in this respect they have been invariably flattered by the hasty evidence of tourists *. Without detracting in

* "Sewen, a delicious fish, similar in appearance to the Salmon-trout, and, I believe, peculiar to the south-western coast of Wales." *Warner.* —*Wyndham* speaks of the southern and western parts of Wales abounding with this fish, which he tells us "is of the salmon kind, but in his opinion much superior."—Manby, likewise, in his account of St. David, remarks that the sewin is *peculiar* to the coast of Wales, adding, that "it is exactly like a *trout*, and differs from that fish *only* in its superior flavour."—But after all, it is certainly more remarkable, that Mr. Pennant, who was a native, and a constant resident in Flintshire, North Wales, knew so little of this fish as to be misled into the vulgar opinion of its being confined to the southern parts of the Principality, and the north of England. When speaking of the grey, he confesses he is uncertain whether it is not a mere variety of the salmon, but on the authority of Ray, he describes them separately." "I met with a fish, (I suspected to be a grey,) taken in the sea near Conway. It weighed twenty-two pounds;"—and he concludes with saying, "*This* we believe to be the sewin or shewin of South Wales. The description was communicated to us by Dr. Roberts, of Herefordshire." We may reasonably infer from the tenor of these remarks,

the least from the credit of the South Wallian districts, to which nature has been most bountiful, this assumption must be declared erroneous in the outset. We have observed the same fish in many of the creeks, the rivers, and seas that wash the most distant shores of North Wales, as well as in those of the southern counties, though certainly in less abundance. So far as my own observations tend to ascertain the truth of this affair, the sewen is no where found so commonly in Great Britain as in the Severn, or Bristol Channel, and the streams that communicate with them; for like the common salmon it is equally an inhabitant of the briny ocean, as of the clearest fresh waters in the interior of the country.

Although so well known in South Wales,

remarks, that the sewen was not correctly known to Mr. Pennant; had he ever seen the South Wallian fish of that name, he must have recognized a sort of salmon which I should imagine he could by no means be a stranger to. Whether this species frequents the coast of Flintshire, I am not positive, but in the bay of Beaumaris, a few miles to the westward, this fish is certainly found —I have myself, at different times, taken three of them in lord Penrhyn's wier, upon the north coast of Caernarvon, in that bay.

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the history of this fish is involved in deep obscurity. Among the Welsh it has been long since maintained that the sewen is a species distinct from the common salmon. Owen, in his MS. history of Pembrokeshire, written in 1603*, speaks of the "sueinge," and some other small fishes, which he tells us are "informe, taste, and taking, all one with the samon, but lesser and shorter in eating than the samon." At the same time he confesses, that although some think, indeed, they are salmon which have not yet arrived at their full growth, the best fishermen of those days were of opinion that they were of several kinds, and would never become salmon. The opinions of those men were founded on practical knowledge, and they were just; the sewen by chance may attain the size of the largest salmon, an instance of which I once observed near Havod, but they still retain those characters by which the smallest of the kind may be discriminated.

* Harleian MS. in the British Museum, 6824.

From

From the common salmon (*salmo salar*) the sewen differs in various particulars that will not fail to strike the eye of the judicious naturalist. The general *contour* of the whole fish is slightly dissimilar: the head is shorter and more sloping; while the lower jaw extends rather beyond the upper one, the precise contrary of which is observable in the common salmon. The back is of a pale greyish colour, glossed with blue, and by no means so dark as in the common salmon; this greyish colour prevails under the scales from the back to the lateral line, beneath which the whole fish is of the brightest silver. Both on the back and sides, above, and below, the lateral line, the body is marked with dusky purple spots of a roundish shape, which on close inspection appear to be somewhat cruciform: the lateral line is straight, and placed rather lower than in the generality of fishes. The tail is slightly forked, but not semi-lunated as in the common salmon: when the flesh is cut it is of a pale red, and in point of size

the sewen rarely exceeds twelve or fifteen inches, weighing from one to two pounds each *.

Cardiff castle is a noble structure, occupying a great extent of ground on the north side of the town. About seven years ago the habitable part of the castle, a fine suite of apartments, in an ancient style of grandeur, that forms the western wing of the building, was to have received a very complete repair,

* The Sewen of South Wales, I think may be admitted as the grey (graia) of Ray and Willughby, which Linnæus allows to be the same as the *gralox* of the Swedes, and *salmo eriox* of his Systema Natura. Bloch, an eminent German Ichthyologist of Berlin, speaking of the salmon tribe in his *Naturgeschichte der Ausländischen Fische*, contents himself with saying, the *graia* of Ray is ambiguous, and blames Linnæus in his preface for adopting Ray's defective account of that species. The Salmo Eriox of Linnæus is in consequence passed over without further notice. But I am persuaded, beyond a doubt, that the Salmo Schieffer mulleri of Bloch, is nothing more than the Sewen of South Wales; that it is most likely, therefore, the *Graia* of Ray and Willughby is very probable, and by a natural inference, the true Salmo Eriox of Linnæus. This would prove the Sewen to be a native of the Baltic sea, and the rivers communicating with it;—the *Mayforelle* and *Mayferche* of the Austrians, from the time of its appearance in their rivers: *Siberlack* of Pomerania, *Saumon* argenté of the French, &c. The Sewen, or silvery salmon, a name synonymous with that which it commonly bears upon the Continent, is, perhaps, more applicable than "the grey," which the above-mentioned author calls it, when we consider the silvery splendour of this fish.

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when the death of the possessor put a period, for a while, to the progress of those improvements.—Before this time, the castle had undergone amendments that were far less gratifying to the peculiar taste of the antiquary, than to the admirers of modern reformation. Grose laments the depredations which it had sustained before his days, but it suffered again materially within the last twenty or thirty years, the space of time elapsed since he saw it. The courts and walls that formerly extended across the area, have vanished, and the venerable keep divested of these appurtenances, now trimly crests the summit of a verdant eminence on one side of a smoothly mown grass plat. Our attentive conductor, a civil old domestic of the last family who has the care of the castle, expatiated with much apparent satisfaction on the propriety of this amendment; recounted very minutely all the difficulties they had triumphed over in the removal of those stupendous walls that had formerly intersected the area, and formed the

inner counts of the castle; and in the true spirit of modern innovation, declared, that the keep itself was *very near* being fitted up some short time ago for a *dancing room!*

This fantastic metamorphose of the ancient keep, a frowning veteran tower that has indisputably braved the dangers of every hostile storm for the seven preceding centuries, was to have been undertaken for the gratification of the gentry in the vicinity, who would have been thus accommodated with a more commodious assembly room than that in the town hall which they possess already. The keep, exclusive of the flanking towers, is of an octangular form, appearing from the great breadth of the facets nearly circular, or very slightly angulated, within the walls, and presenting a clear area of about seventy-five feet in diameter. It was in contemplation to cover this tower with a noble roof of copper. There were to have been many windows pierced through the walls, two fire places of spacious dimen-

dimensions, one grand entrance, and the whole to have been superbly decorated with chandeliers and pier glasses.—As the first step towards this alteration, the rubbish that laid within the tower was removed to the depth of five or six feet below the former level: here the workmen ceased from their labours, and the walls remain as before, more happily decorated with entangled ivy, and a variety of humble weeds, which nature alone has bestowed upon them.

We had ascended to the keep with ease, by pursuing the spiral path that thrice encircles the lofty mount on which it stands, and then conducts to the entrance. From the summit of this mount the spectator enjoys a charming view of the surrounding country. To the northward, in particular, we recognise, at the distance of four or five miles, the old *Castel-coch*, or red castle, so named from its ruddy aspect, rising under the brow of a wide sweeping hill, amidst the cluster of a few trees.

Castel-coch was built to defend the pass along the Taeffe river in ancient times. Some say the period of its erection is coeval with that of Cardiff; and assert still further, that there was a subterraneous communication between the two castles. That there were passages of this kind which extended from Cardiff castle to some place unknown, upon the other side of the Taeffe river is certain, from an event that happened here during the civil wars in the time of Charles the First. The castle was then garrisoned by the king; Cromwell besieged it in person, but being a strong hold, and bravely defended by the royalists, would have cost the usurper much trouble to reduce, if a deserter from the place had not conducted the republican forces through one of the secret passages that laid immediately under the river. Passing through this avenue, the soldiers entered the castle in the dead of night; surprised the garrison, and took possession of the place. The prisoners were honourably treated, and the traitor rewarded, with

with a halter; Oliver, who had every reason to discourage treachery, even in his friends, ordering him to be executed as an example to his own soldiers, after the royalist garrison marched out.—This, or some other subterraneous passage, was discovered very lately in the town, close to the Cardiff arms hotel, by a party of workmen who for some purpose were employed to dig there. One of them, while busy at his work, perceiving the ground sinking beneath him, called out lustily for help; when his astonished comrades had just time to throw a rope within his reach, of which he caught firmly hold, and thus saved himself from falling into the uncertain depth below. The magnitude of this excavation, or the course it pursued, is equally unknown. Neither of the workmen had the curiosity, or perhaps the courage, to explore it, and the opening which led to the discovery, was closed up again as soon as possible.

There is nothing within the castle to detain

the traveller, except a few pictures, portraits of distinguished persons who have been lords of the castle, or their immediate relations, some few of which do no discredit to the pencils of the masters whose names appear to them.—A suite of whole length portraits, by old painters, arranged in one apartment, pleased us much: each of these pictures, besides representing an ancient lord of Cardiff in his proper robes, contains a brief relation of his life and honours, emblazoned in letters of gold on one side. The first, which by the bye is a striking resemblance of the figures we usually see of that detested monarch, Richard the Third, is designed for Sir Andrew Windsor, constable of Windsor castle in the reign of that king; an office he had also held in the reign of his unfortunate predecessor, Edward the Fourth. The descent of Sir Andrew is traced to Walter, the son of Other, a powerful baron in the time of Edward the Confessor; Walter was constable of Windsor castle in William the Conqueror's days, and assumed

assumed the sir name of Windsor for that reason.

There is another picture of Sir Thomas Windsor, and a third of Sir William Windsor; the latter a man of short stature, with light hair, was lord panterer of England at the coronation of queen Mary. Sir Edward Windsor, whose portrait is suspended near the latter, is said to be the first man that entered the breach at the taking St. Quintin's, in Flanders, from the French, when the famous constable, count de Montmorency, with many other great men, were taken prisoners by the English.

In a corresponding apartment we were shewn two good pictures, by Romney, painted in 1783; one of John Mount Stewart, baron of Cardiff, and the other of his lady, Charlotte Jane. Several of the Windsor, and the Clavering families, are preserved here likewise. There is one painting of a famous, and we supposed

supposed a favourite dog of lord Windsor's, that is allowed to obtrude itself in the series of family pictures. The merits of this sturdy animal are unknown, unless we are to estimate it by his strength, which was certainly prodigious. "Banquo," an inscription on the frame sets forth, "though held by a man weighing eighteen stone, upon his master's calling to him, he got there dragging the man along."—A fine portrait of Thomas lord Windsor, governor of Jamaica, in armour, who died in 1687, occurs in the breakfast room; this is painted by Vandyke. Another of the Hon. Charles Windsor, who died in 1741, is from the pencil of Dahl, a cold and inanimate production. There is likewise the portrait of a lady, scarcely better, by the same painter, suspended near it.—That of the Hon. Dixie Windsor, second son of the earl of Plymouth, who died in 1743, is in a spirited style by Kneller.

Over the fire place is a rough sketch by Ibbetson,

Ibbetson, an interior view of the castle keep, with a painting made from it in 1789, that includes the portraits of the late lord, several of his friends, the mayor, town clerk, and other persons of the town assembled within the ruin. Above this is a strange-looking picture, attributed to Hans Holbein, A. D. 1568, in which are represented four boys playing at cards and chess, with the father, mother, and grandmother overlooking them. —The last of these portrait pieces that need be spoken of, is a crayon drawing of the present youthful heir to the estates and titles of the family, John, earl of Windsor, and his brother lord James Stewart, when little children; the eldest, about two years of age, is playing with a dog; the other, much younger, is laying by his side.—This drawing was executed about seven years ago. As an effort of the artist's talents, the picture may have its faults, but it ranks above the ordinary level of mediocrity. The figures are boldly sketched, and above all there is such a bewitch-

bewitching expression of infant innocence depicted in the countenances of the little babes, that it is scarcely possible to contemplate the pleasing group without emotions of tenderness; a sentiment we experienced in a more forcible degree, when our conductor mentioned the reason of its execution. At this early age of infancy, death, the great destroyer of human felicity, deprived them, first of one, and then of their remaining parent. Of noble relatives, the guardians of their rising years, they were far from destitute, but we still must feel for such a privation of parental fondness: of affections inseparable from our nature, which neither friendship, wealth, nor dignity can supply.

The *black-tower* on the west side of the ancient gateway, has an indubitable claim to remote antiquity. There is a tradition extant, that informs us, Robert, the unfortunate son of William the Conqueror, was confined in a miserable dungeon within this tower for the space

space of six and twenty years: once, it is asserted, he attempted to escape from his imprisonment, and for that high offence was barbarously deprived of sight by order of his brother Henry. In confirmation of this dismal tale, a cell is still shewn in the lower part of the cell, as the place of his confinement. This we entered by a descent of two or three steps below the level of the earth, and found it really, if possible, more wretched than had been represented.—The appearance of this place, a dungeon of small dimensions, excluded equally from the air and light, save only that which is admitted down a chimney-like funnel on one side of the apartment, cannot fail to excite a thrill of commiseration for the sufferings of the unfortunate prince, who falling thus a victim to his brother's unbridled despotism, was condemned to all the horrors of perpetual solitude within these walls.

It would be some amelioration to the wounded feelings of humanity on this occasion,

sion, were the improbability of this tradition so manifest as certain writers believe.—That Henry deprived his brother Robert of the throne, and confined him within the precincts of the castle, is not to be denied: the only remaining question is, whether he lingered away the rest of his days in this solitary abode, in a lamentable state of misery and blindness; or being allowed the unlimited range of the apartments within the castle, the horrors of perpetual confinement were in a slight degree alleviated; and this is likely ever to remain a matter of conjecture. Littleton affirms that Henry made his imprisonment as easy as possible, furnishing him with an elegant table, and buffoons to divert him: pleasures which for some years past he had preferred to all the duties of sovereign power. But after all, the testimony of Caradoc deserves the most serious consideration. This historian, unbiassed by any party views, relates the circumstances of Robert's captivity, as well as the occurrences that led to it, in a manner so plausible, and apparently correct, as to silence many

doubts, and at least induce us to dispute the veracity of those who maintain a contrary opinion, in their zeal to support the character of an ambitious prince, free from censure;—a prince who, by means the most violent, perfidious, and unjust, deprived his elder brother of the throne. The relation of Caradoc is to this effect. Robert, the eldest son of William the Conqueror, being prevented from succeeding his father as king of England, through the artful intrigues of his brother, William Rufus, retired to his possessions in Normandy, that he might meditate in safety upon the proper means to be employed for the recovery of his kingdom. But being at length persuaded he should never be in a condition to maintain his rights against the power of Rufus, who was now firmly established upon the throne, he thought it most expedient to accept the sum of ten thousand marks that was proposed to him, on condition of his surrendering his pretensions to the kingdom into his hands.

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With this sum of money he determined to set out with a pompous train of attendants: the money was paid, and Robert proceeded accordingly on his expedition. During his absence, William Rufus was killed in the New Forest by Sir Walter Tyrrel, and Henry, without any scruple, immediately seized upon the throne as his successor. The death of the late king soon reached the ears of the indolent Robert, but it was not till the following year that he came to England to put in his claim to the kingdom, and by that time Henry also was too securely seated in his authority, to be removed by the indecisive measures of his brother. Matters were compromised very indifferently between the parties, when Robert thought proper to return to Normandy; where, as he was not disposed to submit to the usurpation of Henry, he might still concert means for obtaining possession of the crown. Robert de Blesmo, Arnulph de Montgomery, and William, earl of Mortaign, three powerful nobles, entered into the views of

of Robert, encouraged him to persevere, and promised to support him. Henry, who was not ignorant of these proceedings, was equally determined to act with vigour. He fitted out a powerful armament, and set sail in the fifth year of his reign from England to the coast of Normandy, in order to suppress this rebellion against his power, when Robert and his allies, as it turned out in the sequel, imprudently gave Henry battle; for the king, obtaining a decisive victory, Robert, and William the earl of Mortaign, fell into his hands, both of whom he brought back with him to England. To punish his brother Robert most effectually for his presumption, as the historian tells us, he first caused the eyes of the unhappy captive to be plucked out, and then condemned both him and his ally, William, to imprisonment for life in the castle of Cardiff*.

* In a tour lately published by Mr. Lipscomb, a gentleman who bids defiance to meddling critics, the place of Robert's captivity is stated to have been the castle of *Cardigan!*—Another writer (Mr. Evans) informs us, "*Robert Carthouse* was confined in the large octagon tower on the Keep in Cardiff castle," observing at the same time that "the dungeon is neat and fair." *Cambr. Itin.*

This act of unbridled despotism must have taken place very shortly after the castle was erected, for it was not till the reign of William Rufus, the predecessor of Henry, that the conquest of Glamorganshire was undertaken by the Normans.—To this important conquest it may not be deemed superfluous to advert, in tracing circumstances so intimately blended with the earliest history of the castle. It is to this event the castle owes its origin: the conquest of this lordship was also the prelude to that of Gwyr, of Pembrokeshire, and Brecknockshire, and after an interval of time to the subjugation of the greater part of the South Wallian territory to the dominion of the English, or the Norman lords.—Leland seems to have mistaken the particulars of this memorable transaction. Speaking of "Caertaphe castle," this antiquary acquaints us, that the conquest of Glamorganshire was effected in the days of William the Conqueror. He names Hamo (meaning perhaps Hamon or Fitz-hamon) an earl of Gloucester, as the leader of

of the Normans in that expedition, and states the number of knights who accompanied him at thirteen, instead of twelve.—According to Caradoc, on the contrary, the Normans made their first appearance in Wales between the years 1066 and 1071, but the attempt upon Glamorganshire, whatever might be intended, was not attempted till some time after. The occasion of their first visit to that country was to assist a rebellious Cambrian chieftain, named Caradoc, against Meredith the prince of South Wales, in which they succeeded most effectually, for Meredith, being brought to battle near the Rumney river, his forces were defeated, himself slain, and Caradoc exalted to the throne of South Wales.

But the Welsh soon after began to perceive the absurdity of calling in the aid of foreigners to assist in settling the disputes that prevailed amongst themselves. The Normans had become acquainted with the state of the country, and profiting by that knowledge,

made various excursions into the maritime parts of South Wales, from whence they obtained considerable booty.—About the year 1089, Llewelyn and Eineon, the two sons of Cadivor, lord of Dyfed, incited Gryffydh ap Meredith to take up arms against his sovereign, Rhys ap Tewdor, and uniting their forces, passed with their army to Lhandydoch, where they boldly challenged prince Rhys to fight. Their offer was accepted, and in the end the brothers were severely punished for their temerity, for a desperate battle ensued, in which the rebels were worsted, and Gryffydh ap Meredith being taken prisoner, was afterwards executed as a traitor.

At the close of the battle fortune was more favourable to Eineon, he escaped; but not daring to trust himself with his own kindred, he fled to Jestyn ap Gurgant, lord of Glamorganshire, who was then in actual rebellion also against Rhys, the prince of South Wales. To ingratiate himself with Jestyn, Eineon promised

promised him on certain considerations (one of which was to receive Jestyn's daughter in marriage) that he would bring a considerable body of Normans to his assistance. This was agreed to, Eineon set out for England, and prevailed on Fitz-hamon and twelve other knights to go with all the forces they could raise into Wales, to favour the designs of Jestyn. Their army accordingly arrived early in the year 1090 in Glamorganshire, where they were most honourably received and entertained by Jestyn. The aspiring chieftain then joined them with his own forces, and directed their march into Rhys's dominions. The South Wallian prince, although at the advanced age of ninety-eight, no sooner heard of the movements of his enemies, than he determined to oppose them. All his force was mustered for this purpose. Both armies met near Brecknock, where a dreadful battle ensued, and after a prodigious slaughter on both sides, victory declared for Jestyn. Happily, the hoary headed prince was not destined

to survive this reverse of fortune, to witness the expiring glory of his country; he bravely fell in the heat of action, and the Principality was shortly after torn in pieces and divided amongst his enemies.

This division of the country, in the first instance, is attributed to the ungrateful conduct of Jestyn, who having at length gratified the utmost stretch of his ambition, and dismissed the Normans with a suitable reward, absolutely refused to fulfil his stipulated agreement entered into with Eineon for the services he had rendered him. Jestyn had artfully concealed his intended infraction from Eineon till he thought the Normans had set sail for England, but he was in this respect deceived, for though they had retired to their ships, they had not left the coast; and Eineon, burning with resentment for the trick imposed on him, chose rather to betray his country, than suffer it to pass unpunished. He entreated the Normans

mans to land again, and take possession of Jestyn's territory for themselves. Few arguments were requisite to inflame their minds, they knew the fertility of the land, and were easily persuaded to comply with Eineon's wishes. Jestyn, who perceived too late the ill-timed folly of his own conduct, was immediately dispossessed of the whole lordship of Glamorgan, the Normans dividing the most pleasant and fertile parts among themselves, and gratefully bestowing upon Eineon a mountainous and unfruitful district for his share of the spoil.—The whole of the Glamorgan lordship including the petty states dependent, extended from Rumney-bridge on the eastward, to Pulh Conon in the opposite direction, on the south it reached to Aberthaw, and terminated in a northerly direction on the confines of Brecknockshire. An extent of country altogether of about three hundred and seventy square miles.

Fitz-hamon retained for himself what was

termed the royal lordship, and the rest of the country was divided among the knights who accompanied him in the following order. *Aberogwr* was assigned to William de Londres, *Neath* to Sir Richard Grenfield, *Coity* to Sir Paine de Turberville, *Lhan Blethyan* to Sir Robert St. Quintin, *Talauan* to Sir Richard Syward, *Penmarke* to Sir Gilbert Humfreville, *Sully* to Sir Reginal de Sully, *Eastorchard* to Sir Charles Berkrollers, *Peterton* to Sir Richard de Soore, *St. George* to Sir John Fleming, *Fonmor* to Sir John St. John, and St. *Donat*'s to Sir William de Esterling. Eineons's share was the lordship of Senghenyth: besides which, Caradoc Fitz-Jestyn, the eldest son of the former possessor, received the lordship and castle of Auan; another of his sons had Ruthyn lordship; and a few knights fees were divided amongst the Normans and Welsh of inferior rank, who had assisted in their enterprise.

To ensure the due obedience of these knights,

knights, Fitz-hamon conferred the respective lordships upon certain conditions only. It was enacted, among other things, that the knights should constantly attend one monday in every month upon the county shrievalty, and for that purpose assigned an outer ward of the castle, in which suitable lodgings were appropriated to each. Here, also, he resided himself in general, and kept the courts of chancery and exchequer. Fitz-hamon lived some years to enjoy the fruits of conquest. According to the best authorities he was mortally wounded and died at the siege of Faleise, in 1107. Cardiff then descended by marriage with Maud, the eldest daughter of Fitz-hamon, to Robert, earl of Glocester: William, the son of Robert, succeeded him, and during his time the castle was taken by Ivor Black, a Cambrian mountaineer: he surprised the garrison with a small party of his adherents in the night, and carried off the earl, together with his wife and child, all of whom he retained prisoners till he had received satisfaction

faction for certain injuries his countrymen had sustained.—The castle probably fell into the hands of the Welsh in the reign of king John, for in the year 1215, as history relates, young Rhys, the son of Gryffydh, returned home with great triumph, having, in the short space of three days, become master of all the castles throughout Gowerland and Morganwc (Glamorgan).—In the year 1233, Cardiff castle was taken by the forces of prince Llewelyn, under the command of Maelgon and Rhys Gryc, assisted by the earl of Pembroke, and by singular chance escaped destruction, as every other castle taken in that expedition was destroyed. Finally, during the civil wars under Charles the First, this place was garrisoned by the royalists, but surrendered into the hands of the parliamentary forces in 1646.

CHAP. VI.

Walk to Landaff;—Ruins of the Cathedral,—Remains of the Bishop's Castle.—Second Excursion to this Place; its modern Church and Monuments.—Journey from thence.—Adventures at St. Nicholas.—Bonvilston Village.—Morning Prospect of the Vale of Cowbridge.

THE afternoon of the day on which we first arrived in the town of Cardiff, was nearly spent in surveying that striking memorial of feudal ostentation, the castle; we had only leisure afterwards to bestow a cursory visit on another interesting spot at no great distance, the city of Landaff; a place which, for various reasons, my companion was not less anxious to see than myself. This we accomplished, and returned again to the head quarters we had previously secured in the town before the close of the evening.—Our walk to Landaff being finally determined on, we quitted Cardiff by crossing over the Taeffe

Taeffe river; beyond which we had been directed to pursue the turnpike road to the west of the town, till another should offer itself upon our right hand, the course of which we were then to follow. These our instructions we attentively obeyed, and very shortly after passing the second mile stone, entered the place we were in pursuit of.

Nothing could surprise us more than the appearance of Landaff, which although it retains the dazzling appellative of an episcopal city, proves to be literally only a village; one of no great extent, and still smaller consequence. To the curious traveller, Landaff is notwithstanding likely to afford amusement: the ruins of the old cathedral in a particular degree deserve consideration.—There is something very majestic, solemn, and impressive in the aspect of these ruins: they bear an incontestible evidence of the stateliness of this dilapidated pile, when flourishing in its pristine glory, and even in decay the venerable relics seem to look down with conscious dignity

dignity upon the stranger to awaken interest: —to reproach the vandal rage of a despoiler, whosoever he may be, that could without remorse destroy such a fine example of architectural excellence and beauty.

The only part of the old cathedral at present standing in the western extremity, of which the remains are not very inconsiderable. The door-way and apertures of the windows are sufficiently perfect to convey a good idea of the prevailing style of the building in which the Norman, and what is usually termed the gothic, are happily united. On each side of the nave there has been formerly a narrow aile, separated by a colonade of slender clustered pillars, supporting arches of a gothic form; three of which upon the north side are still in being.

At the north west angle of the old cathedral rises an amazing lofty square tower of elegant workmanship, two sides of which rest upon

upon the walls of the main building, but on the east and south side it is supported only by two light arches that branch from a single pillar. The buttresses of these arches, both upon the pillar and in the wall, represent each a whimsically distorted figure kneeling, or rather bending beneath the enormous weight imposed on them.—When we consider the perfect condition of this tower, compared with the rest of the old cathedral, it becomes a matter of difficulty to conceive by what specious oversight Mr. Grose could have described the ruins of this building in the terms adopted in his *antiquities of Wales:* that he had never seen them is the most plausible conclusion. He informs us, that the west end of the cathedral *had* two towers formerly, both of which were in ruins in the year 1786, and after an interval of almost twenty years, one of these very towers remains not only standing, but to all appearance complete.—I have elsewhere read that it had two towers at the west end, *both* of which were blown down in the

the year 1703. A late writer * relates the matter differently again; he tells us there are still two elegant towers of extraordinary height at the west front, that are profusely enriched with the best sculpture of the *norman* age.—With becoming candour be it spoken, not one of all these contradictory remarks is true. The single tower at the north west angle, as already said, appears to be in good repair, while the other, which originally occupied the corresponding angle on the south west, is destroyed, some trifling portions of the walls alone remaining. The tower now standing was built by Jasper, duke of Bedford, who was lord of Glamorganshire, and uncle of Henry the Seventh, king of England.

* Barber. Tour through South Wales, p. 183.—The Rev. J. Evans, in a tour publiſhed during the present year (1804) asserts, that two towers are still standing, one of which is much lower than the other. Nor is this author content with thus blindly following his predeccssors in error, he ludicrously improves the blunder by offering his conjectures as to the time in which the lower one was erected. This he tells us appears to be much later than the original building, and supposes it to be that rebuilt by Jasper, Earl of Bedford. A very slight acquaintance with the history of the cathedral would have apprised this gentleman, that the tower erected by Jasper, being 150 feet in height, was loftier by sixteen feet than either of the towers standing at the west end of the building previous to the reign of the Seventh

The door cases of the old cathedral, two of which remain, one on the south side of the ruin, and the other in the west front, are of Norman architecture, while the gothic prevails more generally in the rest of the building. With the exception of the ruined fragment of the tower at the south angle, the west front is most entire. The semi-circular arch of the door-way is curiously embellished; upon a tablet suspended in the center, is the figure of a bishop, attired in his proper robes, with his crosier and other insignia of that ecclesiastic dignity, which is thought to be designed either for St. Dubritius, or bishop Urban. Above the three lofty narrow windows, over this door-way, is a range of Norman arches, the central one of which is pierced for a window, and over this is a mutilated image, seated in an ornamented recess, with an open book in his left hand,

Seventh Henry (whom it is presumed he means by Henry the Fifth) and that consequently if two towers were really remaining at this period, the lower one must be of an earlier, instead of later date than the other. Indeed from the fragments of the lower tower now remaining, that part appears to be coeval with the original fabric erected by Bishop Urban.

which

which is believed to be the effigy of Henry the First, in whose reign the cathedral was rebuilt. An ancient cross surmounts the loftiest pinnacle of this front of the building.

Landaff, it appears, became a bishopric in the time of St. Dubritus, whose death is usually placed in the year 522.—Before the Norman conquest, vast possessions were attached to this see, most of which were alienated by William the Conqueror, when he assumed the throne.—The stately fabric whose ruins we now survey, was erected in 1120, by bishop Urban, who dedicated it to the four following saints, St. Peter, St. Dubritius, St. Teiliau, and St. Oudoceus. At the dissolution, the annual amount of its revenues are stated to have been 154l. 14s. 2d.

These ruins, with the modern church adjoining, stand at the bottom of a grassy hill, whose brow is neatly ornamented with a few trees, and some respectable houses, behind which the town of Landaff is situated. A

 few

few score paces to the southward of this spot, we observed the remains of the bishop's castle, a ruin of which little more is now extant than the shell of an old building, including the ancient gate-house, with an extensive outer wall, by which the works were originally surrounded. These enclose a vast space of ground, opening into the lawn before the mansion of Mr. Price, the area of which has been long since converted into a flower garden. On one side the wall has been continued along a lofty artificial embankment, and the wall was further strengthened with two towers, of which the ruins remain, one near the middle, and the other at the farthest extremity of it.—In both of these, the shattered apertures of the windows may be discerned through the widely spreading ivy that essays in vain to conceal them.—The reduction of the bishop's castle to nearly the deplorable condition which it now exhibits, is imputed to Owen Glyndwr, who took up arms against Henry the Fourth; another very fine building, the archdeaconal castle of the same see, was also

also destroyed by him at that time. Urban, the builder of the Church, has the reputation of being the founder of this castle, which is supposed to have been erected about the year 1120.

The evening was hastily declining, when we bade farewell for this time to Landaff, after amusing ourselves for a few minutes only with a slight survey of the ruinous old castle. At no great distance from this building, we had just discovered the direct foot track which upon enquiry we understood would lead us back to Cardiff: instead, therefore, of taking the main road, we preferred returning by this; and at the close of an agreeable saunter of rather better than a mile across the meadows, once more reached the banks of the Taeffe river, near Cardiff bridge; having, in our route, enriched ourselves with a few botanical acquisitions that were worth selecting. The prospects which our walk afforded, were not destitute of beauty; too level to abound with romantic situations, they were

notwithstanding pleasing, and derived no small degree of interest from the ruby tints of the setting sun that illuminated the more conspicuous features of the landscape. In the retrospect the city of Landaff, with the aspiring tower of the Cathedral, and the mansion of Mr. Price in front, forms one striking groupe of objects; another appears before us, the town of Cardiff, with its gigantic castle, and the airy fane of St. John's steeple. But what I admired most was the cheerful face of the country as we proceeded, a district rich in cultivation and pasturage, and prettily diversified with a scanty sprinkling of woods.

We were fortunate in the choice of a delightful morning on the succeeding day, to continue our ride from Cardiff to the market town of Cowbridge, a distance of thirteen miles to the westward.—But in a subsequent journey between these places last summer, no such pleasant circumstances attended us; the rains fell heavily at intervals, and more than once impeded our progress.—After leaving Cardiff,

Cardiff, in the latter instance, we again struck across the meadows before mentioned, and retraced the old pathway till we reached Landaff. It was the object of my second visit to this place, to inspect the ruins of the castle and cathedral at perfect leisure, and more especially to examine the interior of the modern church, which had been unavoidably neglected before. But besides these considerations, we were tempted to indulge in the pleasures of an easy pedestrian journey upon the Cowbridge road, which in our former ride had been hastily passed over.

Having entered the town of Landaff, our first concern was to engage the good services of the parish clerk, who happened to be busy in his humble occupation of mending shoes. For a little time he seemed to question within himself the propriety of acquiescing with our request, as he was not inclined to leave his work, and it required persuasion to induce the good man to escort us to the church, that we

might gratify what he appeared to deem an idle curiosity.

Passing down the nave of the ruined Cathedral, we arrived immediately at the west door of the modern Church, which our conductor deliberately unlocking, permitted us to enter.—Nothing either in the exterior or within this building corresponds with the classic elegance of the old cathedral we must acknowledge. The style of architecture is of no determinate character, and the appearance of the place within is singular. Yet I could not subscribe to the harsh remarks it has been fashionable with tourists to bestow upon the builder for his absence of taste, and want of judgement. Without adverting to comparisons between the beauty of the new church, and the noble structure that preceded it, the present, as a place of worship, is in my mind commodious, plain, and respectable.—The whole of the choir, a spacious enclosure in the center

center of the building, admits on each side an aile of a convenient breadth, in which most of the remarkable monuments of the Church are preserved. The communion table is encompassed within a kind of portico, which some conceive an improper ornament for a christian church, because it resembles, in a remote degree, the superstructures usually raised over the altars of idolatry in the ancient temples of the heathens.—This choir is appropriated to the performance of the service in the English tongue; in St. Mary's chapel at the east end behind the choir, the same is repeated in the vernacular dialect of the country.

Whether the perusal of Wotton's copious description of Landaff Cathedral, or any other which does not at this time occur to memory, had unreasonably enlarged my expectations, I cannot pretend to say; but to confess the truth, I have been seldom more completely disappointed than in our second visit to this

place in search of its supposed antiquities: or some memorials, at least, of those many great and distinguished persons, whose ashes were consigned in early ages to this hallowed spot.—And now we began to discover the real cause of that reluctance which our Ciceroni had betrayed by his silent gestures when we called upon him: he had heard so much dissatisfaction expressed by strangers on this account, that he did not care to press his service.

In the demolition of the ancient edifice, we are undoubtedly to lament the loss of many monuments of an early date, that might elucidate the page of history. Of the few which have been removed from their former stations, and are now preserved within the modern church, the inscriptions are mostly defaced or obliterated. An incumbent massive slab in the pavement of the north aile attracted notice a few paces from the door at which we entered: this may be eight or nine feet in length,

length, of a taper form, becoming gradually narrower from the head to the foot. A flowery cross is sculptured in the center, and two escutcheons on the upper end, but no inscription can be traced upon it. Near this lies another grave-stone of similar dimensions, which is likewise destitute of any inscription, but on which the figure of an ecclesiastic is distinctly visible. The effigy of a bishop is placed in a nich in the north wall, against which the cross, and other emblems of the crucifixion, are disposed on a tablet in basso relievo above the figure: the latter tomb is that of Bishop Davies, who died in 1674, seven years after he was elected to this see.

A neighbouring recess in the north wall of this aile contains a piece of sculpture which some travellers commend as a specimen of exquisite workmanship. This has not escaped the panegyric of Mr. Grose: he describes it as the figure of an emaciated corpse laying in a winding sheet, wherein the appearance of death,

death, brought on by long sickness, is admirably characterised.—But with this description the figure does not correspond. It is rather the sculptured semblance of a body hastening to the last stage of decay; of a corpse removed from the silent repository of the grave, and by a partial unfoldure of the winding sheet that invests it, disclosing to a thoughtless world the end of all its vanities.

The lower part of this figure is broken off. What remains we conceive entitled to no great share of praise, unless we advert to the degraded state of the arts in this country during the fourteenth century, the period in which we are to suppose the monument was erected.—There is a sad story current among the peasantry in this part of the country concerning this singular memorial, which our guide thought proper to relate in a few words. The truth, nay even the probability of the detail, we are neither disposed to insist upon or contest. It briefly acquaints us that the figure

in

in question was executed at the desire of a lady who had unfortunately cherished the deepest affection for a young gentleman, her lover, whose vows of constancy were plighted: they were even on the point of marriage, when the fickle youth saw another female more beautiful than herself, became enamoured, and from that time resolved to desert his former favourite. The disconsolate fair one, unable to suppress the anguish of her slighted passion, essayed in vain to reclaim him: he remained obdurate; she pined with grief, and fell at length, alas! a victim to despairing love. The beauty of her rival had been the source of her misfortunes, and the instability of beauty was the theme of her complaints to the latest breath she drew. To mortify her faithless lover (as the story passes) when he should repair to the church with his lovely charmer to unite the bonds of hymeneal felicity, she ordered this figure, the emblem of our mortality, to be placed upon her tomb; that

that in proceeding towards the altar he might contemplate the silent monitor, and reflect how fleeting, how illusory might prove his own enjoyments; how soon her rival might be despoiled of all those charms which he adored, and become hideous like herself in the cold embrace of death.—In a word, reminding us of that fine apostrophe of Eloisa to the King of Terrors, when addressing her neglectful Abelard.—

> Oh Death, all eloquent, you only prove
> What dust we doat on ———

And we had almost expected, that our informant, while he concluded this romantic tale in the sentiments of the poet, would not neglect to adopt his language:—

> ——— She "trembled, wept, and prayed,
> Love's victim then, though now a sainted maid.
> But all is calm in this eternal sleep,
> Here grief forgets to mourn, and love to weep.
> E'en Superstition loses every fear,
> For God, not man, absolves our frailties here."
>
> POPE.

At

At the eastern extremity of the aile are two monuments of the altar kind. The space in which they stand was originally set apart as a burial place for the Mathew family, and for this reason was formerly separated by a screen both from St. Mary's Chapel, and the rest of the north aile. The account which Mr. Wotton gives of these monuments, which have been once magnificent, is peculiarly interesting. He had the advantage over later writers in examining them when in a far more perfect condition than they appear at present. From this writer we learn, that the recumbent figure in alabaster of an armed knight laying on the monument upon the north side of this enclosure, is supposed to represent "David Mathew the Great," who was standard bearer to Edward IV. and was murdered at Neath by some of the Turbervilles, with whom he was at variance. Mr. Wotton speaks of the figure of a man in armour, bearing a shield at his head, and of six images, five of men, and one of a woman, all bearing escutcheons; the latter

latter most likely included on a tablet, and if so, we observed, that both had been removed, and thrown carelessly behind another monument on the south side of this enclosure, which next attracted notice.

The latter is of alabaster like the other, and rather more complete. It stands in an ornamented recess, and bears two recumbent figures, that of a knight in armour, and his lady. The inscription along the border of the recumbent slab is partly legible, acquainting us that the monument was erected to the memory of Christopher Mathew, Esq. and Elizabeth his wife, both of whom died some time about the year 1500. We could not avoid observing, that the minutest decorations, and habiliments of the figures, are finished with extraordinary care, and have been finely gilt.

A descent of two or three steps led us from hence into St. Mary's Chapel, where we perceived

ceived two grave stones in the floor, supposed to be those mentioned by Mr. Wotton, the first as belonging to Johannes Monumethensis, who was Bishop of Landaff in 1296, and nearer the altar another of Bishop Pascal, who possessed the see in 1343. William de Bruce, also one of the early bishops, lies on the north side of the altar. In another part of the church one is shewn for that of St. Dubritius also.

There were three ancient monuments of the altar kind in the south aile, but when the new church was built on the scite of the old one, the pavement was raised so much higher than before, that they are at present nearly level with the floor. One of these, according to the popular notions of the country people, belongs to *St. Teiliau*, the second bishop of the diocese in 512, but this is very doubtful. The figure of a bishop in his episcopal robes appear upon the stone without any inscription. Some allow it to be about five hundred years old,

old, and conceive it to have been placed here instead of another dedicated to that saint, which for some reason had been removed.

Near this, in a recess on one side, is the monument of a lady who is represented in alabaster. It is believed to be in memory of Christiana Audley, who lived in the time of Henry the Fourth.

The chapter room exhibits, upon a diminutive scale, that fine style of architecture which prevailed, in a pre-eminent degree, in the beautiful chapter house of Margham Abbey. This apartment is square, instead of circular, and of small dimensions, but in the centre rises a single pillar, which, diverging above into the form of Gothic arches, supports the vaulted roof of the building.—Two figures, one of an armed knight, the other of a lady, both in alabaster, stand erect against the wall of the chapter room. In the general costume they resemble those of the Mathews, that lie behind

behind on the north side of St. Mary's Chapel, and are supposed to belong to that family, although it is not exactly known from what part of the church they were brought, or for what purpose they have been placed here. There are many fragments of highly ornamented carved work in alabaster, huddled into an obscure corner, which, with the figures in question, seem to have formed originally one very splendid monument.

Measures having been concerted for the punctual conveyance of our luggage in the morning to the town of Cowbridge, our evening's expedition towards that place was performed on foot, and eventually proved an interesting one, because it offered circumstances that were new, and unanticipated.—Other engagements prevented us from setting out for Landaff very early in the afternoon: our perambulations about that spot, after leaving the church, detained us some time, and we were afterwards too much wearied to

proceed immediately, without refreshment, upon our journey. Landaff affords a comfortable little inn, at which we rested for a few minutes. During this short stay we began to consider seriously how far it would be prudent to extend the limits of our day's excursion: whether to continue our route for Cowbridge, as was proposed in the morning, or prolong our stay at the inn for the night, was an important question at this hour of the evening, and demanded some deliberation. Our landlord pressed us to remain, and in the end we should most likely have acceded to his proposal, if we had not learnt from the conversation of a loitering groupe of farmers who besieged the entry, and were regaling themselves with their favourite *Cwrw*, that there were no less than five inns upon the road between this spot and Cowbridge. Elated by this intelligence, there could remain no reasonable ground of apprehension that we should be benighted on the road, before some kind of accommodation could be secured, even should

we

we be unable to reach the ultimate place of destination; and as we had no other inducement than the operation of such fears upon our minds to detain us in Landaff till the following morning, our departure was immediately determined on.

Evident tokens of astonishment were perceptible in the countenances of our new acquaintances, the moment our intention of proceeding ten miles further on foot that evening was understood.—A resolution that might well stagger the belief of those honest Cambrians, every one of whom had his filly in waiting at the sign-post to carry him home, perhaps to the distance of half a mile, or a mile from the town at the farthest. Indeed they insisted on the impossibility of our accomplishing it, and did not hesitate to blame the indiscretion of the enterprise, with very little ceremony. After refreshing ourselves, however, with a tankard of the landlord's ale, and receiving the best wishes of the farmers with whom we

had been engaged in conversation, that our walk might be more satisfactory in the end than they expected, we took the nearest way, according to their direction, into the Cowbridge road, which we entered near the second milestone to the west of Cardiff.

Heavy, and almost incessant rains that had fallen for a few days before, had reduced the public highway to a most deplorable state for the humble pedestrian. At first we proceeded leisurely, but the reflection that we were yet unprovided with lodgings for the night, spurred us to go on with more alacrity afterwards, in defiance of the wet and mire, which at every step impeded our expedition.—The road, after dipping and rising across the unequal surface of the country ascends, between four and five miles from Cardiff, over a prodigious lofty hill, that commands a prospect so superlatively fine towards the northward, over what are sometimes termed the wilds of Glamorganshire, and the Caerphilly hills,

hills, that the labour of ascending is amply repaid at every footstep by an increasing boundary of horizon, and the consequent disclosure of objects, before concealed, which tend in a more striking manner to diversify the scenery.

Slowly pacing up this hill, we were overtaken by a country dealer, an inhabitant of one of the neighbouring villages, who had been to Cardiff market in the morning, and was returning home. We had observed him alight from his nag at the bottom of the hill, and lead him slowly up the acclivity, and as we had not yet met with any of the excellent inns upon the road that had been mentioned to us, we very naturally expected from this fortunate meeting, to obtain some information concerning them; "Pray friend (said I as he approached) what may be the distance from this hill to Cowbridge?"—"To Cowbridge?" replied the countryman with a wistful gaze of surprise, "at least seven miles further."

And after a short pause rejoined, with peculiar eagerness of curiosity, "You don't mean to walk there to night, I suppose, gentlemen?"—Indeed we do, answered my companion: are the roads more tolerable beyond this hill than those we have already passed? "Yes (said the countryman) for that matter I believe they may, and if you had horses you might soon reach the town; but as I see you have not, I would advise you to stop at St. Nicholas, about six miles this side of Cowbridge, where there is a good inn, and if there were twenty of you, all might get lodgings. But then I don't know the business you are upon—perhaps you must go on to Cowbridge to night?" This was consolatory news most certainly, neither of us being inclined to trudge seven miles further upon such roads as those we had already traversed, or even upon such as our informant conceived might possibly be rather better. We assured the countryman, that having no particular business to demand our presence at Cowbridge on that night more than on the morrow, his advice should be followed, if we could

could obtain accommodations such as he described. Apparently much satisfied with this answer, he remounted his nag, and left us to contemplate the beauties of the landscape which the summit of the hill presented.

A few hours of fine weather had succeeded the heavy rains that had prevailed of late. Still the splendour of the declining sun was only perceptible in transient bursts of its golden light bursting through the swarthy clouds that struggled to veil its glories in obscurity. "The watery stores of heaven" had gathered in wild commotion upon the hills, and to the westward, the portents of a storm were displayed at this time in its utmost grandeur. Every circumstance seemed to threaten that its course would soon be directed towards us. Nor were we mistaken in this idea. The dark rolling clouds, in the space of another half hour, became more agitated: an impenetrable gloomy mist overspread the landscape that stretches towards the north-

ward. Again the storm assumed a wilder aspect: flashes of interrupted lightning darted from the angry skies, at intervals, upon the hazy expanse before us, and the plains reverberated with the hollow deep-sounding peals of distant thunder. From the contemplation of a scene so awful, so admirably calculated to fill the mind with emotions of the most sublime and impressive nature, we were reluctantly driven by the boisterous violence of a shower that passed in our direction. To have sought protection under the shelter of the neighbouring hedges, during the prevalence of the thunder storm, would have been imprudence in the extreme. We determined rather to brave its fury; and after a brisk walk across the hill, contrived to reach St. Nicholas before the rain began to descend in such copious torrents, as must have inevitably wetted us to the skin, if by the intervention of some unlucky accident, it had overtaken us upon the road.

Our reception at this village inn was far from

from flattering. Truly indeed we were sheltered from the rain, but for one whole hour or more we remained in the parlour in uncertainty whether either lodging or refreshment, such as we had expected, could be obtained. Our suspence was only in part relieved by a message from the landlord, conveyed to us from an adjoining apartment, through the medium of one of the farming domestics, that we could have as much ale as we might please; as to the larder and bed-chambers he could say nothing, both being under the cognizance of his wife, who was gone to meeting some miles off, and would stop he knew not how long.

The clock struck ten as our hostess appeared at the gate, peeping in at the parlour window to examine, as we afterwards found, the appearance of her new visitors, whom, by the bye, it was no very easy matter to discern, as we had been only allowed the glimmering of a slender rush-light to illuminate the apartment. Whether appearances did not please her,

her, or rather that she foresaw the scanty contents of her larder would not please us, may be difficult to say, but we waited nearly another hour for the favour of her further condescension to relieve us from anxiety, and at length obtained three small eggs, being all the hen-roost could afford us, and a few thin slices of rancid bacon, with some oaten cake, and sour cheese. Our beds proved no better calculated for our comfort; the dampness of the linen, and free current of air rustling through the crannies of the door-way, and broken windows, left us under no danger of being suffocated, but certainly prevented us at the same time from sleeping very soundly to forget this solitary advantage.

Early in the morning we arose to prosecute our journey with the full determination to avoid in future, as much as possible, the necessity of resting for a night at inns of this description in the Principality; where, to say nothing of comforts, the needful accommodation

dation which the traveller has occasion for, are almost invariably found indifferent.

The morning was much more favourable for our walk than could have been reasonably expected, considering the weather we had encountered for some days past. We were neither deluged with rains, nor incommoded by the piercing heats of the sun: all was mildness. The atmosphere was overcast with clouds: a delicious breeze prevailed, cool, salubrious, and refreshing, while the fair face of nature bore the most lovely aspect.

After reaching the seventh mile-stone which stands on the south side of the public highway, we directed our course across a gateway, and entered the field that stretches to the eastward along the road side, to inspect a large massive stone, which travellers deem an object of druidical curiosity. This ſtands at present in an oblique position, close to a small pool of water. The form of this stone

is

is very rude, being nothing more than an irregular flattish slab, about ten feet in height, and in the middle across the widest part rather more in breadth, but one of the upper corners having been broken off, there is a slope from thence to the top: the greatest thickness just exceeds two feet. Whatever may have been the purpose for which this gigantic stone was placed erect in this place, (for such it appears to have been originally, although now inclining) may be difficult to say. We know that according to the ordinances of the old Welsh laws, it was customary in early times to raise a stone of this description, before those courts of justice in which their king presided in judgement; and it has been surmised, with no very remote appearance of plausibility, that the stone above-mentioned may be in reality one of those. There are some fine cromlechs upon the Duffrin estate within an easy distance from this spot, which are indisputably remains of the Druidic age.

Bonvilston

Bonvilston village, or Bolston, as it is pronounced, is a small place, through which we passed after walking almost two miles beyond St. Nicholas. The neatness of this spot is very striking to the stranger. Most of the cottages have a comfortable aspect, and derive additional beauty from the extent of gardens attached to each, and the perfect order in which they are preserved. To analyse the taste of those village gardeners by the rules of modern art, would be really too fastidious; a little fantastic pedantry is certainly observable. We could not avoid remarking, that the evergreens, with many of the trees, and even the hedge rows in almost every garden, are cut and sheared, as if by one common consent among the inhabitants, into the form of vases, arches, and various other whimsical conceits, not precisely suited to the taste of the present day. But upon the whole, I was much pleased with this spot, and were the question asked, should feel no reluctance in pronouncing Bonvilston to be

in

in my mind the prettiest village in the southern Principality of Wales.

The church stands on the right close to the road side upon a rising bank, embellished in a pleasing manner with a little range of fir trees. The building itself is a plain rural edifice, of a small size, and in no respect remarkable. Before the church on the south side, stands a pyramidal flight of steps, that served in catholic times as the base of a cross, the upper part of which has been long since demolished. These steps are now encrusted with lichens, moss, and some few other diminutive plants. *Asplenium ceterach*, a species not very common, appeared sprouting in plenty from the crevices between the stones, where we also observed the elegant little terrestrial snail, *helix radiata*, in numbers, lurking and crawling beneath the shelter these plants afforded. But neither of these were of so much consequence as the minute land shell *turbo quadridens*, of which a specimen occurred in this spot.

Too

Too much praise cannot be due to the becoming attention the inhabitants of this part of the country bestow upon the very soil that covers the remains of their deceased friends and relatives. According to the superstitious notions tenaciously retained in almost every district in the Principality, the custom of never interring the dead on the north, or *wrong side* of the church, is here most scrupulously observed. The graves lie invariably on the south side, or at the east and west extremity of the church, where the burial ground displays all the neatness and simplicity of a rustic flower garden. Some of the graves are surrounded with a bordering of box, others with basket work, and the enclosed spaces bedecked with a pleasing variety of plants. With the exception of the various kinds of evergreens employed on this mournful occasion, those plants whose flowers exhibit the greatest diversity of colours, seem to be preferred. The deep purple of the aconite are artlesly contrasted with the livelier hues

hues of the expanded rose, the pink, and variegated pansy: daisies are profusely intermingled. The corn bottle and the wall flower, with many others that are distinguished for the gaiety of their blossoms, appeared among the humble tributes of grateful memory concentrated within the verge of this embellished little spot.—There is something sweetly expressive of the innocence of primæval manners in the observance of this ancient custom. The practice of thus adorning the graves of the departed with flowers, prevailed in the earliest days, to which the poetical compositions of the Cambrian bards advert. The fugitive remains of their ancient poesy affords some very beautiful allusions to it. Who can read the lamentations of *Davydd ab Gwilym* over the grave of the illustrious Ivor without admiring the appropriate tenderness of expression with which that custom is described: "O whilst thy season of flowers, and thy tender sprays thick of leaves remain, will I pluck the roses from the brakes; the flowrets of the meads, and gems

gems of the wood: the vivid trefoils, beauties of the ground, and the gaily smiling bloom of the verdant herbs, to be offered to the memory of a chief of fairest fame: humbly will I lay them on the grave of Ivor!

Such a rite appears to have been solemnly observed among the northern tribes of Britain in times of remote antiquity. The planting of trees over the graves of the deceased, owes its origin to the same source. How pathetically is this alluded to in the lofty strains of Ossian, where the bard "pours forth his soul in song," mourning the death of Oscar, and his faithful Dermid.—"By the brook of the hill their graves are laid; a birch's unequal shade covers their tomb. Often, on their green earthen tombs, the branchy sons of the mountain feed, when mid-day is all in flames, and silence over all the hills." Nor are the tender effusions of the immortal Shakespeare to be forgotten in testimony of its observance at a much later period:—

"With fairest flowers while summer lasts
I'll sweeten thy sad grave: thou shalt not lack

The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose, nor
The azur'd hare-bell, like thy veins; no, nor
The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,
Outsweetened not thy breath."

We were much inclined to regret, that a custom so innocent in its origin, so conducive to the moral happiness of the people, and congenial with the sympathetic feelings of human nature, should have become in a material degree, if not entirely, neglected in many parts of the Principality; for contrary to the commonly received opinion in England, founded on the erroneous assertions of English tourists, the practice of planting the graves with flowers is rather local, and prevails only in a partial measure in certain parishes. This neglect is attributable to the impolitic, I had almost said the unbecoming conduct of the clergy in enforcing their claims to the right of pasturage for their horses within the precincts of the burying ground. Wherever this privilege has been assumed, as it must naturally be imagined, this ancient custom has been unavoidably

ably laid aside. When a person is buried in such grounds, the ceremony of bestrewing the grave with flowers is oftentimes observed, more particularly when the deceased happens to be of an early age, whether male or female; but these, not being planted, very soon decay, and are seldom replaced by others after the expiration of a month from the time of burial.

The moment we approached within sight of Cowbridge, our attention was powerfully arrested with the sudden exposure of a burst of scenery, very far superior to any we had before surveyed in this part of the country. Within a mile or two of the town the road slopes gradually over the easy brow of a prodigiously extensive and very lofty hill, from whence this charming expanse of landscape, which had been previously concealed for the most part behind the obtrusive hill, breaks unexpectedly upon the view of the admiring traveller.

For the space of many miles surrounding this exalted spot, the eye embraces an endless succession of gently undulating hills and plains, broken and diversified with ten thousand hues of verdure; dark fleeting shadows, marking the progress of the passing clouds, with intermingled tints of the deepest ruddy brown; and lands waving with the earnest of a prosperous harvest, or preparing for cultivation beneath the hand of tillage. These extensive lowlands lie stretched like a map before the extended vision; softening and harmonizing their contrasted hues as they recede in the distance from our point of observation. Beyond these, we discover features of a more imposing character, a vast range of hills that bound the horizon to the northward, among which we observe the lofty summits of the hills, that occupy a central position in the very heart of Glamorganshire:—the parent source of those extensive mineral concerns, the iron works, which of late years has so eminently promoted the interest and importance of the county. Directly before us, the towering slope of

Penline

Penline hill, crested by its castle, rises to consideration. The Bristol channel, circumscribed within the limits of the opposing shore of Somersetshire, completes the copious prospect on the southward.—Opportunely, a very handsome group of fir trees occupies one of the most commanding points of elevation upon the hill, beneath whose friendly bower those prospects may be contemplated with peculiar satisfaction, when the piercing rays of the noon-tide sun may render the shade they afford inviting. We had no inducement, indeed, to seek their ſhelter, for the scenery, however beautiful in serene weather, was indebted, in a pre-eminent degree at this time, to the magnificence of a tempestuous sky, for all those strong peculiarities of grandeur, that were so forcibly displayed before us. It was, in truth, "the storm dispersing." The murky clouds that had gathered upon the summits of the surrounding eminencies, and foreboded tempests, unable to retain their stations before the assaults of the northern blasts that had

sprang up but half an hour before, were now seen deeply rent, and drifting in disorder from hill to hill; their struggling billows descended precipitately down Penline and the contiguous head lands; and then floating across the plains, till they "reached the dark rolling waters" of the sea, either sunk into the abyss of its waters, or wandered broken and dispersed upon the expansive surface.—With such sublime accompanyments of scenic wildness, have we once beheld the lovely vale of Cowbridge!

CHAP. VIII.

Cowbridge.—Ancient Buildings extant within the circuit of a few miles round this town.—Military edifices of the Norman age.—Pleasant walk to Penline Castle; traces of alluvial remains observable on the summit of Penline hill.—Distant view of Coity Castle.—Llanblythian Church.—Excursion to Lantwit Major, the seat of the first Christian seminary in Britain.—Monument of St. Illtud, and other sepulchral British memorials of the fifth or sixth century.—St. Donat's.—Breaksea Point.—Dunraven.—Return to St. Quintin's or Llanblythian Castle.

THE town of Cowbridge lies, apparently, in a deep bottom, rising in the midst of a small level plain, surrounded on every side by higher

lands, and sheltered by spacious widely sweeping hills. Along those hills which recede to the south west beyond the town, we are told, the great military road, carried through the county of Glamorganshire, may be readily traced in fine weather, stretching in a broad straight line for seven computed miles. This, we understand, is to be seen to great advantage from the commanding elevation lately left by us, and still better from those which lie within a mile or more to the westward of the town. As to the accuracy of this information, I cannot speak with much precision on my own authority. The first time we traversed this road, the weather was uncommonly serene; but we were not then aware, that this ancient causeway could be still observed, and did not therefore look for it; in a later journey I think we saw the line described, but the circumstances attendant on the cloudy state of the atmosphere, precluded us from ascertaining the truth of this conjecture.

A corporate town, governed by two bailiffs, twelve

twelve aldermen, with a proportionate number of common council-men, and other officers, conveys the idea of a place of no mean importance, and such we learnt on enquiry to be the civic honours attached to the ancient town of Cowbridge. The cluster of indifferent little cottages at the first entrance, present no very favourable indication of its opulence, but we had scarcly proceeded more than half way down the main street, before we began to perceive it to be a place of business, and some respectability. The country assizes were held here till within the last three or four years, when the court was transferred, for the better accommodation of the judges, to Cardiff. There is a good free-school in the town, founded at a period so remote, that some have asserted it arose on the decay of the old Christian school at Lantwit. It owes much of its present consequence to that liberal benefactor, Sir Leoline Jenkins, who received the first rudiments of his education in this school, in the reign of Charles the First.

This

This place is divided into two parts, by the course of a small river that flows immediately across the high-street, and is connected by means of a kind of double bridge, which accommodates itself to the vagarious bend of the stream where it passes through the town. Some believe the name of the place is derived from an accidental circumstance that took place beneath an arch of this bridge, soon after the town was built: a derivation that appears to me too fanciful to be admitted seriously *.

In those days of civil tumult, when every town was fortified to guard against surprise from their nearest neighbours, the safety of Cowbridge was well considered. At that time it was surrounded by strong walls, some traces

* "In Welsh this place is called Pont-faen, i. e, a stone bridge; this however is a corruption of Pont-y-fôn, Cowbridge. The arms of the town being a cow, and the bridge over the river which runs through this place having very small arches, it is affirmed, that when the bridge and town was first built, a butcher was driving a cow to be slaughtered, which being worried by dogs, and otherwise overdriven, ran under one of the arches of the bridge, and got so entangled by the horns, that it was obliged to be killed in that situation; from which circumstance it was called Cowbridge." *Swansea Guide.*

of

of which remain. Leland inform us, that the portion of the town enclosed within the walls in his time, was three quarters of a mile in circumference, and that it had besides, a great suburb. There were then three gates in the walls, the east, west, and Port meline on the south. The strong arched gateway, a bold gothic piece of building, with part of the ancient wall attached thereto, is still in good condition; but the others have been pulled down.

Cowbridge in itself possesses no attractions whatever to detain the stranger, except this old gateway, which is evidently of an age subsequent to the Norman conquest of this country; and a strange looking church, the tower of which might easily be mistaken at a short distance for the embattled turret of some old fortress. The environs of Cowbridge afford, however, much amusement. We were scarcely in any instance more completely gratified, than in our occasional rambles about this

this spot. The scenery is fine: to the naturalist the adjacent country is not uninteresting; and objects of no common moment to the antiquary, press upon the attention in almost every direction. Of ancient military architecture, there are many remains in this vicinity; ruins, chiefly of that horde of castles which the Norman adventurers erected upon their respective estates, in the twelfth century, to secure possession of this newly conquered territory. Penline Castle claims an earlier foundation, and, as we trust, an origin far more honorable to the memory of its founder, for it appears to be the work of the native Britons, prior to that event which deprived this district of its independence. There are besides these, the remains of certain religious structures, sepulchral relics, and many other memorials of antiquity, scattered within the compass of a few miles round this place, to the inspection of which we devoted two or three days, and conceived our trouble well rewarded.

The

The picturesque ruin of Penline castle, occupies a lofty situation on the hills, at the distance of a mile to the north west of Cowbridge. Our saunter to this charming spot, was unusually pleasant. We traversed the foot path across the meadows, after quitting the town, till it brought us to the foot of Penline hill, in preference to the dull and more circuitous route along the main road that leads directly to the castle, and by that means, in our progress up the hill, caught a more extensive view of the country surrounding us, than would have otherwise occurred. The eminence on which the castle stands, an amazingly wide sweeping hill, rises rather abruptly on this side, to a majestic height, and overlooks the vale in which the town of Cowbridge is situated.

Upon the higher parts of the hill, as we advanced, a dwarf, scanty herbage, clothing the surface of an impoverished soil, seemed to denote the lofty position of the lands we were

were passing over, or at least of the chilling, ungenial influence of the winds to which the hill is completely exposed on this side; the trees also, that appeared sparingly scattered on the slopes, are of distorted growth, and almost leafless. These hills are of the alluvial kind, the strata of lime-stone, abounding with portions of organized fossil bodies, such as shells, *entrochi*, joints of the *encrini*, and other marine productions, all which are found in plenty near the summit, and testify, beyond the shadow of dispute, that the sea, at some remote period, overflowed even this aspiring elevation.

The pinnacle of the hill is occupied by a splendid modern mansion, the residence of Miss Gwinnet; what remains of the old castle lies behind it. The recent building is apparently erected on the scite of the principal part of the ancient castle, and as if it were really ashamed of such a ruinous appendage rises pompously in front, to conceal it from

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PENLINE CASTLE

London Published as the Act directs [illegible]

from every point of view in which the stranger can conveniently approach.—The fragment in question stands on the brink of a precipitous rocky mount, in order to obtain a sight of which, we were compelled to pass through a farm yard behind the stables of the house, and from thence descend by a steep path to the abrupt side of the hill on which the ruin rises.—A more agreeable prospect than the vale of Cowbridge offers from this exalted spot, we have very rarely beheld. The town is seen extending in a semicircle amidst the fertile plains below. Towards the eastward, those plains are terminated by gently swelling hills, smiling in all the pride of emerald green, sprinkled with trees, and enlivened with roving flocks of sheep: to the southward, a more extensive level is unveiled; beyond which the horizon is closed by the distant sea. But still the solitary fragment of Penline castle, soaring above us with the appropriate drapery of bushes, trees, and ivy, that overhang the verge of the eminence on which it stands, forms by far the most

most remarkable feature in the scenery surveyed from hence.

When we consider the ancient system of British military tactics, the natural advantages of such a situation as that which Penline castle occupies, in early times, must be apparent. At the first glance the conclusion is, that it must have been impregnable if properly defended. Certainly it was far less likely to have been endangered in the shock of war from the fury of assailants, than by the violence of the elements to which it stands exposed most completely.

The founder of Penline castle is unknown: the page of history silent; and tradition even will not assist conjecture. On all hands it is admitted, that the manner of laying its stones, in what is termed the herring-bone style, proves the structure to be of very ancient foundation, since that style is only evident in some few of the oldest buildings extant in Britain. Leland speaks of this ruin. "Penline castle and village (he tells us)

us) is almost a mile by west, north west from Cowbridge. This castelle yet stondith and longith to Turberville."—"There were a while ago 2 brethren of the Turbevilles, wherof the elder left a doughter and heyr; the youngger left a sunne. The doughter was married to Loughor. After great strife, the two Turbevilles children partid the landes." The Penline estate devolved to the Stradlings of St. Donat's some years past, then to lord Mansel, and after that to his daughter, lady Vernon, by whom it was left by will to miss Gwynnet, in whose possession it remains at present.

A prospect of considerable extent opens to view from the north and west side of Penline hill, comprising one of the most delightful inland scenes imaginable. At a distance further across this tract of country than the eye can clearly discern the certain form of objects, a group of cottages, and a noble ruined structure, the village and castle of Coity, may

be faintly traced, rising amidst the clustering trees, by which they appear from hence to be surrounded.—Coity castle is a building of the Norman æra; one, supposed to have been erected by Paine, or Paganus de Turberville, shortly after the Norman conquest in 1091, when the lordship was bestowed upon him. We were rather disposed to regret, that a walk of ten computed miles, being the distance from hence to Coity village and back, could not, with perfect convenience, be added to this day's excursion; as we intended, at all events, to see Lantwit Major before the evening. Contenting ourselves, therefore, with such a remote survey of that interesting spot as a very tolerable glass would afford, we once more resumed our journey. With this design we struck down from Penline hill, by a road that diverges to the right of the foot path we had pursued in our assent, which soon conducted into a close and miserably dirty lane, and at the expiration of about twenty minutes walk, brought us into the road leading to Pyle.

After

After another quarter of an hour's perambulation along a bye way in the same southerly direction as that we just quitted, and to the full as disagreeable, we reached Llanblythian, the church of which we proposed to inspect with some little attention.

Llanblythian church, with a trifling extremity of the village, occupies a most romantic spot; rising upon the uppermost elevation of a precipitous hill, below which the rest of the village, with the ivy mantled remnant of the castle, embowered among the trees, appear at once unfolded to the view. I have a strong presumption that this is the church of which Leland makes mention in the following passage. "The saying is, that Lanlithian is the Head Paroch Chirch to Cowbridge." The truth of this I am not informed, but the town possesses certainly a spacious old church, within the limits of the ancient walls. The church of Llanblythian is also large, and from the singularity of the ornaments attached to

it, is probably of no very recent date. Over the entrance on the south side, the rudely sculptured figure in bold relief, which Mr. Strange mentions, immediately caught our eye. This is a gigantic, distorted bust of a man, in the attitude of leaning upon one arm across a kind of resting place, straining himself with prodigious effort, to discharge from his mouth the waters that fall in rainy weather upon the upper part of the building; for it is in fact nothing more than the extremity of a water spout. There was formerly another grotesque figure of the same cast on the opposite side of the entrance, to correspond with it; but the head of this has been struck off. Faces of some strange creatures still adorn the tower, one being placed at each angle just beneath the parapet.

Within, the church was once, to all appearance, finely decorated, traces of the carved work in wood is observable in the chapel on the south side of the nave; some curious examples

amples of which are also to be found in other parts of the building:—

Look next on greatness, say where greatness lies?

There has been a good monument of the altar kind under a recess in the south chapel, at present much defaced, and left in a state of ruin. Several massive grave stones are arranged in order along the aisle of the church, not a single inscription on any one of which is now intelligible. We perceived also among the rubbish scattered on the floor of one of the pews, a piece of sculpture, the fragment of an old monument, charged with the armorial bearings of some family of proud distinction, now neglected, trampled on, and perchance forgotten!

The only sepulchral memorial in Llanblythian church that materially engaged my observation, is one of the mural kind, a neat tablet of marble, placed against the north wall, in remembrance of Jenkin Llewlyn and

Elizabeth his wife, the parents of sir Leoline Jenkin, knt. who was doctor of laws, judge of the admiralty, and both privy counsellor and principal secretary to Charles the Second. —What a lesson to aspiring genius depressed by poverty, and unprotected by patronage, does the biography of this distinguished personage afford!—To this exalted sphere he had no pretensions in early life; he was born of humble parents in the village of Lantrics-sant, about six miles distant from Llanblythian, and received the first rudiments of his education at the free school of Cowbridge *. From thence he was removed to Oxford, at the age of sixteen, and in the year 1641 was admitted a fellow of Jesus College. Being firmly attached to the royal cause, he took up arms at the breaking out of the revolution in support of his sovereign; but shortly after leaving the university, he retired into Glamorganshire. In this retirement he engaged

* Vide Malkin.

as

as tutor to sir John Aubrey, at Llantrythid, where he became acquainted with Dr. Frewyn, archbishop of York, and Dr. Sheldon, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury. After this, the misfortunes of the times compelled him to leave the country, and while in exile, he wandered through great part of France, Germany, and Holland. At the restoration he returned, and was elected one of the fellows of Jesus College, and when Dr. Mansel resigned, was chosen principal. His profound knowledge of civil and maritime law, qualified him to become an able assistant to Dr. Exton, judge of the Admiralty, in which situation he acquitted himself with so much credit, that at the death of Dr. Exton he was appointed sole judge. In 1668, at the express desire of the king, Charles the Second, he was further appointed to succeed Dr. Meyric, as judge in the prerogative court of Canterbury. The following year he received the honour of knighthood, for having happily succeeded in a commission to which he was appointed with three

others, to the court of France, for the recovery of the effects belonging to Henrietta Maria, the queen of Charles the First, which had been taken possession of at her death by Louis the Fourteenth. After this, he became successively, a representative in parliament for Hythe in Kent; an ambassador and plenipotentiary on several occasions of the utmost difficulty, a representative for the university of Oxford, privy counsellor, and secetary of state, and died covered with honours in the year 1685.—Thus were the laudable and assiduous exertions of those uncommon talents which Providence had bestowed upon him, the means of raising him above that station, to which the capricious chance of fortune had at first assigned him, to a rank in life both honourable to himself, and useful to his country, and his king.—Such are the means of obtaining pre-eminence, at which the virtuous need not blush, while their probity remains without reproach. In the instance of sir Leoline, they reflect a superior degree of

lustre

lustre on his character, and confer a dignity on his name, of more real worth, than could possibly have been derived from any considerations attached to distinguished birth, or the pride of an illustrious ancestry.—The original memorial erected by this great man in memory of his parents, was found in a neglected state in the year 1763, either within the south east angle of the chancel, or in the burying ground adjoining to that spot, and in consequence of that discovery, was restored in its present form, by the Rev. Thomas Purdo, D. D. principal of the fellows of Jesus College, Oxford, in gratitude to the memory of the son, who had been when living, their very liberal benefactor.

A plain unassuming tablet, placed against the wall within the porch, commemorates the death of William Bruce, Esq. who departed this transitory scene of life in 1761, in the sixty-first year of his age. The loss of this amiable character, probably gave birth to the lines inscribed

scribed on this little monument. At least they appear to be original, and as we conceived them, a tribute of genuine friendship, not entirely deficient of pertinent application.

This good man dead, wert thou his friend?
With tears lament thy lot,
Did fortune no such blessings lend?
Lament that thou wert not.

At Llanblythian we obtained instructions from the villagers, as to the position and distance of Lantwit Major, which we understood to be situated in a southerly direction, and by the nearest road that could be taken, lay between four and five miles off. Beyond this village we traversed a tedious road, in which no object worthy notice intervened to claim attention, till we approached close to Lantwit. Here the ivy mantled shell of an old monastic ruin, rising above the houses, caught our eye, and at the first glance its imposing aspect led us to mistake it for part of an ancient castle.

Fortunately,

Fortunately, at the instant we entered the town, we were accidentally met by Mr. Powel, a worthy farming gentleman of this place, who perceiving we were strangers, accosted us very kindly, enquired the object of our visit, and gave us a most cordial welcome to his house to take any refreshments we might desire, a token of civility we were not disposed to decline, as we understood there was no inn within the distance of some miles. Under this hospitable roof we rested only a few minutes, because we were anxious to inspect the place at perfect leisure. Mr. Powell was kind enough to accompany us in this survey, and under the guidance of such an intelligent conductor, we could not fail to acquire much local knowledge.

The reflexions awakened in my mind, as we proceeded in tracing the comparison between the ancient and modern Lantwit, were not of the most pleasing nature. I will not call the town, as it now stands, an assemblage of

of mean and ruinous houses, thinly populated, and bearing the mark of external poverty; as a country town, its rank is still respectable, although compared with what appears to have been once the flourishing condition of the place, Lantwit exhibits a melancholy picture of desolation. In many places, it is impossible to avoid observing the memorials of its humbled greatness, the foundations of houses long since overthrown and demolished, and even the traces of whole streets, in which scarcely a single habitation now remains. The houses and cottages composing the present town, straggle over a wide extent of ground. Much of the intervening spaces between them, which are now laid out in gardens, was formerly occupied by houses, the scite and traces of whose buildings are oftentimes betrayed, peeping above the surface of the soil. There yet remains in one of the streets, the spacious steps that served as the base of a large cross.

Shortly after passing this, an abrupt turning

ing conducted to the church, which standing in a bottom, is not readily perceived among the houses surrounding it. Stepping into the burying ground on the north side, the solitary monument of St. Illtud arrested our attention. This is placed erect in the middle of the ground. At the distance of a few yards further, we perceived the antique, decorated pillar, reclining against the north wall of the church, which has so long excited the speculations of the antiquary.—Mr. Strange, to whose remarks on the antiquities of this country we have before alluded, has certainly not examined the former of these memorials with the care that ought to be expected, and Mr. Gough, in his learned edition of Camden, abiding on such respectable authority, has been involved in error. This stone, which the inhabitants invariably admit to be the sepulchral memorial of St. Iltud, is a comparatively thin slab, not a quadrangular truncated pyramid of equal breadth on each of the four sides, as the figures in the Archæology represent.

sent. It stands upright in the ground, rising to the height of about seven feet. At the base the width may exceed three feet, but the thickness scarcely more than one foot, and the dimensions both of width and thickness, diminishes a little gradually from the base to the summit. Originally this appears to have been surmounted by another stone; most likely the shaft of a cross was ingrafted on it, as there is a square recess at the top that might serve to admit the tenon stone *. The

* The Rev. J. Evans, a late tourist through this country, conceives he has discovered the counter part of this cross on the south side of the church-yard, lying sunk in the ground, in the foot path leading to the porch. The lower part, he observes, has a tenon of the same dimensions, as the mortise and the ingrail work exactly corresponds. If this writer had not further stated the head of this cross to be of a circular form, and not very dissimilar to that of the cross at Margam, I should have imagined he meant the broken shaft of a quadrangular pillar about five feet in length, that lies on the south side of the edifice, close to the porch of what is termed the New Church, because the tenon of this is very perfect, shewing distinctly that it stood originally in a similar kind of mortise. The pattern of the involuted lines on this stone also agrees so nearly with that of St. Iltud's monument, that in a second excursion to this place about last autumn, we had the curiosity to measure it, when I perceived, notwithstanding the similitude of the design, this pillar never had formed any part of the cross supposed to have been stationed formerly upon the summit of St. Iltud's monument;

The inscription is scarcely visible, a few rude letters only appearing through the incrustation of lichens that overspread the surface. Tradition has faithfully preserved the purport of this inscription, which an eminent antiquary, Dr. Gibson, defines in these words.

Samson posuit	+ Crux Iltuti
hanc crucem pro	o Samson redis
Amnia (Anima) ejus	Samuel egisar

The

monument; the tenon being fourteen inches broad, and ten wide; whereas the mortise on the latter is sixteen inches and a half broad, and not quite six inches wide.—The stone with a circular head is of the same æra, but what striking similarity Mr. Evans could perceive between the patterns formed by the ingrailed work on this, and that on the stone inscribed to St. Iltud, does not appear so obvious to us. Still more, before he had so strenuously recommended to the clergyman of the parish the task of removing this ponderous stone from its present station, and placing it erect upon the other, it might be worth while to examine whether they had in reality ever belonged to each other. The epitaph in the lower compartment of this circular cross, which may with propriety be admitted as an authentic document upon this question, pretty clearly proves the negative of his suggestion. Although some few of the letters appear obscure, the inscription taken collectively is sufficiently distinct to confirm the truth of this assurance [a].—This is not the only point in which we must, in deference to the antiquarian reader, dissent from the statements of this assuming writer, both in speaking of the church and monuments

[a] Vide the drawing of the cross annexed.

of.

The deeply wrought involutions of the lines that chequer the surface of the stone, are visible enough to enable us to trace the patterns with fidelity. All that can be said with certainty of this monument seems to be that it was erected by one Samson for the good of his soul, about the sixth century, to the honour of St. Iltutus.—

Respect-

of Lantwit Major, as the following particulars will, in a certain measure, testify.

Though the ruins at the western door (meaning St. Mary's, or our lady's chapel) he enters what he thinks may be termed the posthumous vestibule of the church, which he finds to be a *considerable burial place*, and *roofless*. It is worthy of remark, that in this *same* roofless vestibule, he discovers two monuments, one a mummy-like figure, and the other an ecclesiastic. In defining the inscriptions on these, it is curious to observe how perfectly he agrees with Mr. Strange, without appearing to be aware, that either the inscriptions must have been in some respects defaced since Mr. Hay of Brecknock transcribed them for that gentleman, or that Mr. Hay had not himself attended with sufficient accuracy to them.—Again, at the *east end* of the church, he describes a *chapel* and *shrine*, both in *ruins*, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. For both of these we sought in vain, and presume he must mean the chapel at the *west end* of the church, through which he entered the "vestibule" before mentioned.——By the shrine we are to suppose the remains of an old monument which really lie in the east end of the new church, behind the altar screen, for the sake of security. This altar screen, which is of fine free-stone, a kind found within a few miles of the spot [b], and curiously embellished with

[b] Mr. Malkin, whose accuracy may be depended on, says it was brought from quarries near Brigend.

carved

Respecting this celebrated personage, Iltutus, or as the Welsh call him, *Illtyd Varchog*, the following particulars, selected chiefly from the "Cambrian Biography" of that ingenious writer, Mr. Owen, may not prove unacceptable. "Illtyd was the son of Bicanus, by the sister of Emyr Llydaw, a saint who accompanied

carved work, he calls a *wainscotted curtain*. Then wandering again to the subject of the broken monument concealed in the narrow recess between this *wainscotted curtain* and the east window, in the hasty confusion of his ideas, he talks of a figure of *exquisite* sculpture, in compact free-stone, representing Prince Richard Hopkins; the head broken off, and lying by the side, with a *british crown* on the head, and a *golden torques* round the neck, meaning thereby the *cap* and *ruff*, in common use about the days of Henry the Seventh; this being the costume both of the small bust, and the figure of an adult belonging to the same monument.——And finally, he completes this tissue of inadvertencies, by mistaking the lower half of a female statue, that of the Virgin Mary, in our lady's chapel, for part of the effigy of Howel Dha, at the sight of which he bursts into a strain of poetic rhapsody in praise of that great Cambrian legislator!—Other particulars, not less remote from accuracy, might be selected from this curious example of modern tour-writing, were it necessary to trespass further on the reader. To Mr. Evans, for the freedom taken with his detail, I cannot conclude better than in the confident language which he himself employs in the preface to his "Letters." "If, in ascertaining facts, I have sometimes slightly animadverted upon authors who fancy themselves entitled to more veneration and respect, and who conceive I have been too free with their works, I say, disclaiming every idea of personality, "Amicus Plato, amicus Socrates, sed magis amica Veritas"

Garmon to Britain, and was placed at the head of the Côr Tewdws, in Caer Worgorn in Gwent, or congregation of Theodosius, so called from being established by that emperor, but which had been destroyed by the pagan Irish when Iltutus came to it; and they at the same time carried Padrig (Patrick) who then taught there, away to Ireland. He restored it, and it was therefore called Côr Illtyd, Bangor Illtyd, and Llan Illtyd Vawr, and by the English, St. Iltutus, after his name." We further learn, that the name of Illtyd is honoured among the Welsh, because he introduced among them an improved mode of ploughing to that before in use, and that he was therefore joined with *Hu* and *Coll* to form a triad of those who conferred blessings on the nation of Cymry. He died about the year 480.—Samson, we are told on the same authority, was the son of Amwn Ddu, king of Graweg in Llydaw, by Anna, daughter of Meirig ab Tewdrig, a saint who lived in the sixth century; he had been the scholar of St. Iltud,

PILLAR, HIEROGLYPHIC TABLET
and other British Antiquities at
LANTWIT MAJOR.

Published as the Act directs by E. Harrison, May 1789.

St. Iltud, and been appointed to an archbishopric in Armorica, or Brittany, but after the death of Illtud, became the principal of the school at Lantwit, and erected this monument to the memory of his teacher.

The pillar leaning against the north wall of the church, bears no inscription. It may not be the remains of a sepulchral memorial like the former, indeed we rather conceived it to be the shaft of some gigantic old British cross, which seems to be the opinion likewise of several antiquaries who have examined it. The original height of this shaft, when perfect, is uncertain, the piece at present standing, measures six feet four inches from the ground to the summit, but the end on which it rests is probably buried to some considerable depth in the earth, while the uppermost extremity is evidently mutilated. This pillar is nearly circular, about three feet in girth at the upper end, and exceeding five feet at the base, where it emerges above the level of the ground.

Three equidistant treble bands or fillets, encircle the pillar, dividing the surface by that means into distinct compartments, in each of which, pretty nearly the same kind of latticed ornament prevails, but not exactly: the lower compartment, for example, rising above the bottom fillet, being marked with oblique bands that alternately decussate each other, and form a kind of diamond work over the face of the stone; the involutions of the bands upon the compartment above this, are much more complex in their disposition. There is a remarkable longitudinal groove, extending from top to bottom along that side of the pillar inclining against the wall, which was designed, as I conceive, for no other purpose than to admit the corner of a building, or some other kind of support, to preserve this massive stone in an erect position when the cross was perfect. The natives, who entertain very extravagant notions on some occasions, believe this stone to be of the Druidic age,

age, and infer something very mysterious from the appearance of this groove. A countryman on the spot told us it was sometimes called the "Druid's pillar." A tradition, he assured us, prevails also, that among the ancient Britons, before they were converted to Christianity, it was customary on certain festivals, to offer the chastity of virgins at this pillar, in honour of their detestable deities.—The people of this district being of Flemish extraction, may in reality have received such an absurd tradition from their forefathers, who were no doubt anxious to blacken the moral character of the Britons they supplanted, even by aspersing the memory of their remotest ancestors. Certain it is, that the errors of paganism were obliterated many centuries before the Flemings settled here.

Adjoining to the western extremity of what is termed the old church of Lantwit, are the remains of an ancient chapel, dedicated to St.

Mary the Virgin, whose statue once occupied a handsome pointed niche in the east wall, but of this only the lower half remains. There is a curious small sculptured tablet in the wall below this niche, which to all appearance is of an earlier date, and is in point of style and execution, much inferior to the broken statue of the Virgin over it. This tablet represents a female recumbent figure, leaning on the right elbow, and supporting her head upon her hand. From the middle of this figure arises a kind of ornament, not altogether dissimilar to what is understood by a genealogical tree or table, and I think must have been designed for that purpose, as the ramose branches into which the upper part is expanded, are intermingled with several human faces, some of which bear a sort of crown upon the head. That they are commemorative of some line of the Cambrian princes, is highly probable, but there is nothing further to justify conjecture as to the persons for whom they were absolutely intended. An empty lateral niche

Vol. i p. 343.

ANCIENT BRITISH CROSS *in the burying ground of* LANTWIT MAJOR CHURCH

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niche is observable in the same wall a little to the right of this tablet.

Passing through these ruins into the burying ground, we were soon convinced there was much to amuse us in this spot. Here we paused to inspect three curious monuments; two of which, are to the full as interesting, as those before examined on the north side of the church. One of these bears every indication of an early date. This is a fine cross of that particular kind in vogue about the fifth or sixth century, having the shaft and circular summit profusely decorated, and on the lower compartment a concise latin inscription in the old British character. This lies in the ground with the face uppermost, close to the footpath conducting to the porch of the new church. The length of this cross, inclusive, from the base to the summit, is four feet nineteen inches. Formerly it consisted of a single stone, but the circular head included in that measurement having been severed from the shaft, it is composed of two parts, which are

permitted to remain in their original position. The upper surface of this cross is ornamented with a singular combination of lines, disposed into triangular and diamond shaped compartments, which altogether present a very striking example of the taste in sculpture that prevailed in Britain thirteen centuries ago. This cross is evidently sepulchral, for the inscription may be distinctly traced to that effect in the same rude character as those upon the stone commemorative of St. Iltud, which is acknowledged to have been erected about the year 490.

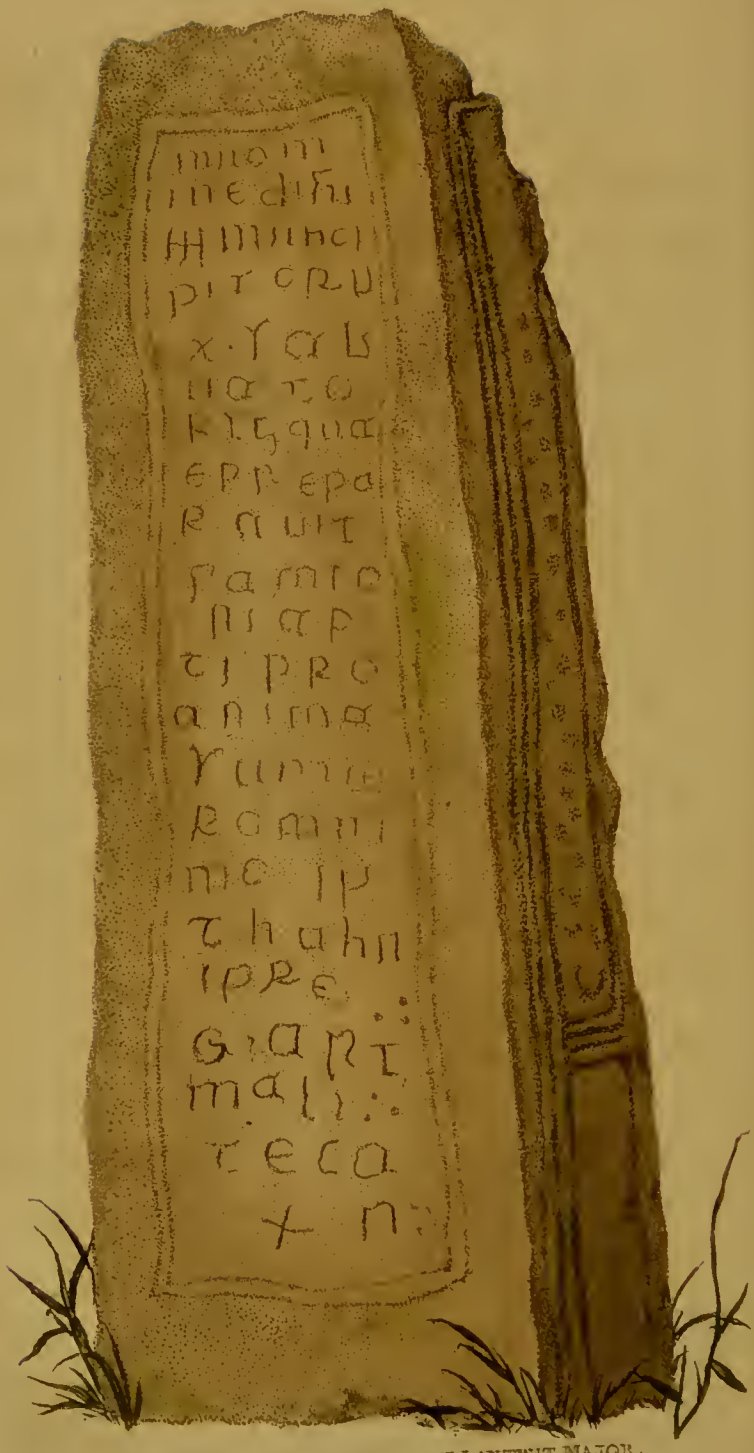
Whilst I was busily engaged in endeavouring to decypher the inscription on this old cross, Mr. Powel walked a few paces back with my friend, to shew him another monument that was discovered in the year 1789, in a spot which this gentleman pointed out: this it seems was close to the south wall, near the east side of the entry to the old church, against which the stone is now stationed.

Many

Many years before, a tradition prevailed in this part of the country, that a large sepulchral stone, which recorded the memory of two kings, had been accidentally buried in the grave of "Will the Giant." This was a young man, so called on account of his extraordinary stature, being seven feet seven inches in height when he died, although he had only then attained his seventeenth year. Will had desired to be interred near this stone, which then stood erect against the wall, but in preparing the grave of sufficient dimensions to admit his remains, the sexton incautiously dug so close to the foot of the stone, that just as the body was laid into the earth it gave way, and falling from the wall into the grave with prodigious violence, it was found impossible, or at least inconvenient at that time, to remove it; the stone was therefore left in the position in which it fell, and the grave being filled up, it was completely covered over with the earth. This transaction had taken place so long ago, that the recollection of it had nearly

nearly faded by degrees away. But Mr. Edward Williams, who resides at the village of Flemingstone, only a few miles from the spot, remembered having heard the story when a boy, and proposed at some future day to search for this stone. An opportunity at length offered to this intelligent mason to gratify his curiosity. He began by clearing the ground in the spot described to him so many years before, and discovered it at a small depth below the surface, after which he obtained assistance to raise it from the earth, and place it against the wall where it now stands.

This is a large and very ponderous stone, of a slightly pyramidal shape, measuring six feet nine inches and a half in height, twenty-seven inches across the front at the base; twenty-three inches across the center, and seventeen inches at the top. The depth of this stone is about eighteen inches, being nearly of an equal thickness from the base to the



ANCIENT BRITISH MONUMENT AT LANTWIT MAJOR.

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the summit. No other decorations appear upon the face of the stone than a rude double line, circumscribing the inscription within the innermost limit, but there are certain traces of impressed dots, and wreaths in the compartment, formed by the treble lines upon the narrow edge, or side of the stone. Nothing can be more obvious than that the form of the letters proves them to be of the same æra as those on the tomb stone of St. Iltud, and the cross before-mentioned, and they are indeed in such an admirable state of preservation, that there can be no embarrassment in transcribing these words. "In nomine di summi incipit crux Salvatoris quæ preparavit Samsoni a p. ti pro anima · · · · · · · · · · · · · Thah · · · · · · et Artmali. ·. Teca +N." The purport of the remainder, I must confess, appears to me obscure. Mr. Edward Williams reads them thus. "In nomine di summi incipit crux Salvatoris quæ preparavit Samson*iarati* pro anima *sua et pro Anima Iu*tha*helo Rex* et Artmali *Tega +M.*" to the ingenuity of Mr. Williams,

no

no one will be more disposed than myself, to allow every credit, but I am much afraid, the corresponding form of the letters will not bear him out in some of the ambiguous passages. There is an obvious deviation from the original in more than one instance, which appears to have been assumed in order to comprise the words within the tenor of what he conceives to have been the meaning. Great obscurity prevails, indeed, in a most material point, namely, the words which he decyphers "Iuthahelo Rex."——There was, we we remember, in the fifth century, (the time to which this stone is unanimously referred,) a prince of Armorica (Brittany) called Ithel Hallo, whose six sons, we are told on record, accompanied the celebrated St. Cadvan in his important mission from the mother church to this country, with the design of correcting the pelagian heresies that had crept into the doctrines of Christianity preached at that time among the Britons. As one of those sons was named Tegai (or Teca) the idea is extremely plausible,

sible, that this stone was inscribed at his desire to the memory of his father, and another. But I must confess, there is something specious in this conclusion. The letters supposed to constitute the words alluded to, has baffled every attempt of mine to determine with accuracy, and to perplex the reader with mere conjectures, might be thought presuming. In the fac simile of this inscription, the traces of the letters as they now remain, are marked with all the fidelity in my power, with the hope of assisting the decisions of those who may be better pleased to form their own opinions concerning it.

The Church of Lantwit Major is a spacious edifice. Its eastern wing, including the tower rising near the middle, is called the new church, to distinguish it from the rest of the building, because the latter, as the appellation implies, has an higher claim to antiquity. Except the fragments of an old monument, that of Richard Hopkins, who lived about the

time

time of Henry the Seventh, which is consigned to a narrow recess between the east window, and the altar screen, there is nothing material here to recompense the trouble of research. The altar screen is, however, rather curious for its sculpture. There is a small stone font near the porch under the tower, of an antique figure. On the pavement also near it lies a grave-stone, to the memory of Matthew Voss, who lived to the age of 129, and was buried here in the year 1534, an instance of longevity that would be esteemed much more remarkable in the vicinity of our great metropolis, than in the county of Glamorganshire. It was not entirely without astonishment we learnt upon the spot, that various instances might be adduced of persons who were now living in this part of the country, that had attained above their hundredth year, and were still in the more complete enjoyment of all their faculties, perfect health, activity, and vigour, than ought in reason to be expected at the age of seventy.

Close to this grave-stone, a pair of folding doors

SINGULAR ANTIQUE MONUMENT

in the old Church of

LANTWIT MAJOR.

London, Published as the Act directs by F. Grose and Mr. [illegible]

doors opens the communication between the new, and what is termed the old church. The latter is a large empty building, long since converted into a burial place, and only interesting to the stranger for two ancient monuments that are contained within it. These lie parallel to each other upon the floor, above the level of which they are a little raised. On one of these is the recumbent figure of William de Richelieu, or as it reads, Willhm: de: Rhc·····*, invested with priestly robes of the twelfth or thirteenth century. The appearance of the other is infinitely more extraordinary. This is a mummy-like coffin of stone, in which no more of the figure is visible, than the face, which the sculptor has displayed in bold relief, through a circular opening in

* The inscription on this monument is cut along the edge of the incumbent slab on which the figure lies. At the head, upon this border, the words "Willhm: de Rhc·····" are visible, but the south west corner of the stone being broken off at the conclusion of the letter c, it is most likely part of the name is lost. In the Archæologia, where this is figured, and in the last edition of Camden, it is transcribed thus: "Willhm: de: Rhc hllo, &c." Mr. Gough thinks it may be read thus: Willhm: de: Rhchllo: gyt: ici: deu: de: sa: Alme.: eyt: merce.

the

the front of the coffin at the broadest end. Indulging my own conceptions, nothing can be more remote I think from the actual truth, than to suppose this to be a Danish antiquity; or in other words, that it was destined to commemorate some distinguished leader among the Danes, who, perchance, invaded this part of the Cambrian territory, was slain in the enterprise, and lies buried here: were I to hazard any conjecture, it should be indisputably to refer this ambiguous piece of sculpture to the Norman age, because the ornaments are of the particular kind introduced by that people in the twelfth century. There is a wide dissimilarity between the decorations that extend along the two sides of this stone, which the sketch will best explain. But I would here observe, that in consequence of this dissimilitude, the stone appears to me to have been intended to lie parallel with another of a corresponding form and ornament, that the two inner series, and two external borders might agree, for the style

in

in which they are executed throughout, evinces uncommon neatness, that would be utterly incompatible with the irregularity expressed in the present design. Should this surmise prove unfounded, I should certainly suspect that there must be another inscription on the right side of the stone like that on the left, because the latter affords us no information as to the person for whom it was intended *. This it is impossible to decide, as it now lies too close to the monument of William de Richelieu.—Certain writers tell us, that the justly celebrated Howel the good, who reigned sovereign of all Wales, and died in the year 948, was buried in this church †. The particular spot is stated to be the east end of the building, others affirm that it was in the

* With the exception of one or two letters at each extremity, this inscription may be read nearly, though not exactly, as they appear in Camden.—Compare, for instance, the fac simile of this inscription in the annexed plate with Camden's readi g

ncpatrae lleclur: que sujacet
lstatuetur.

† "At the east end of the church (Lantwit Major) the famed Howel Dha the lawgiver is buried." Mr. Salisbury Brereton in Archæol, vol. III. p. 116, &c.

chapel now in ruins at the west end, but these reports have no foundation in authentic record that I am aware of.

Lantwit Major, which in our days is comprised within the compass of a large straggling village, as we have already seen, was a place of eminence in early times. In the annals of the British church, for some time after the introduction of the Christian faith into this island, no spot shone more conspicuously. Theodosius the emperor, established a Christian congregation in this place before the expiration of the fourth century, which continued to flourish till the country was invaded by the pagan Irish, who not only succeeded in their attempts upon this coast, but securely maintained possession of an extensive tract of land in which this spot was included for nearly half a century. The celebrated St. Padrig, or Patrick, was principal of the congregation established here, and was carried away by the Irish. Before the close of the

the fifth century, St. Iltud, or Iltutus, to whom the church is dedicated, arrived here in company with Germanus, at the express command of the pope, to extinguish the pelagian heresy, which had then risen to such a height as to occasion much serious apprehension and alarm to the roman pontiff. Germanus, readily perceiving that the errors which had crept into the tenets of the British church, arose chiefly, if not entirely, from the ignorance of the clergy, thought it highly requisite to found a seminary, for the instruction of those youths who should be afterwards called upon to fill the important offices of the church; this place was chosen for the purpose, and thus arose the first Christian school of this description in the island of Britain. St. Iltud was appointed to the superintendance of this school. Under his charge the church was restored to its former glory, and after his death it was dedicated to him by the name of *Llan Illtyd Vawr*, which signifies the great church of

Iltyd. Lantwit, the name of the town itself in modern times, is evidently from this source.

Another excursion to the southward of Cowbridge, enabled us to extend our ride through Lantwit Major to the little village of Donat's, in order to survey the castle erected contiguous to the spot, by that powerful norman knight, sir William le Esterling, or Stradling; after which we proceed by Dunraven, Bridport, and Ewenny, and in the return to Cowbridge from this circuit of about sixteen miles, revisited the old castle of Llanblythian.

St. Donat's castle fails to impress the mind with those ideas of feudal greatness, solidity, and strength, which its local situation, or still more, the important motives for which it rose in the eleventh century, would authorise us to expect. The castle occupies one part of the summit of a gentle eminence, and appears on the inland side to have never been very difficult

ficult of access. A low embattled wall, pierced with numerous ilets, but which one can scarcely imagine was ever adequate to the defence of the castle, forms the outermost enclosure, within the boundaries of which the castle itself rises to a still greater height, displaying a confused groupe of buildings, embattled turrets, chimneys, and the like, which altogether produce a strange effect.—Entering through the large old gateway, which is well delineated by Grose, a second porch presents itself, leading into a spacious paved court, surrounded by the habitable parts of the castle. This suite of buildings is in an antiquated style. There are certain ornaments within that might be extremely well dispensed with. The removal of the basso-relievo tablets in particular which represent the Roman emperors and other distinguished personages of antiquity, disposed in various parts of the building, has been earnestly recommended, and with much reason, by every traveller of taste. They have at this time a ludicrous appearance, being bedaubed with a variety

of glaring colours, that form a contrast by no means agreeable to the hoary aspect of the walls against which they are stationed.

Some old writers have asserted, that from the period in which this castle was first built, which was in the reign of William Rufus, A. D. 1091, for the space of six hundred and forty-eight years, the building had never undergone any alteration. During the whole of this time it remained in the possession of the descendants of the Stradling family. About the year 1739, or probably rather earlier, this family became extinct, when the castle devolved into the possession of the honourable Bussey Mansell, Esq. Should it be actually true, that this castle remained for such a considerable length of time in its primitive form, it may still exhibit the same appearance as in the days of its original founder. This suggestion is in part confirmed by an old drawing in my possession, in which the external figure is exactly the same as it now stands. That the apartments have received material

repairs,

repairs, if not alterations, is natural to suppose, from the circumstance of its still affording a convenient habitation for several poor families who reside within its walls.

A little to the westward of this haughty fabric, rises one solitary quadrangular turret or watch tower, which commands a most surprising prospect of the channel within the boundary of its horizon. The intention of this watch tower is but too clearly pointed out by the privileges which the lords of this castle claimed to the spoils of all the shipping, wrecked or drifted upon their manor; a practice, if not a privilege, which it is to be lamented, prevails even now among the lower orders of the inhabitants, in open defiance of the laws: and in violation of every generous trait that exalts the character of human nature.—Upon this sea-worn beach, while we toiled amidst the falled ruins of the rocks that soar in sullen dignity above us, it was scarcely possible to divest my mind

of those reflections, which a scene so truly awful is calculated to inspire. The troublous waves were dashing, foaming, wildly raving at our feet; then receding in circling eddies for a while into its gloomy bosom, to return with redoubled fury: the cliffs and caverns, formed by its unceasing devastations, resounding in concord to the hollow tumult of the waves: vessels tossing in the distance upon the angry deep, and the host of sea gulls, winging their restless flight, with ill-omened mewing, among the rocks around us.—A thrill of horror pervaded every faculty, when those impressive circumstances impelled me to anticipate the evils that would result, should the tempest rise with more unbridled violence, and some one of those distant vessels, bearing, perhaps, the reward of honest and adventurous industry, to its final port, be unfortunately borne upon the billows by the adversity of contending elements, and strike upon this shore!—What would be the issue;—let stubborn facts, truths that are not without precedent

dent in our own days, answer this.—Does not the imagination swell with more than fancied scenes of misery, when the eye, glancing along the margin of the briny flood, descries, within the extent of coast it embraces, the desperate assemblage of rocks, and crags, and lurking shoals, among which so many misfortunes have befallen unwary mariners within our own memory? Even now the sea beats impetuously against that disasterous ridge of rocks, Break-sea point, where a fine vessel was driven ashore some time ago, and plundered by the inhabitants. The force of language, inspired at the sight of this awful spot, is inadequate to pourtray what fancy seems to realize: we see the proud vessel,

" Uplifted on the surge, to heaven she flies,
Her shatter'd top half buried in the skies;
Then, headlong plunging, thunders on the ground;
Earth groans! air trembles! and the deeps resound!
Her giant bulk the dread concussion feels,
And, quivering with the wound, in torment reels:
* * * * * * *
Again she plunges! hark! a second shock
Tears her strong bottom on the marble rock!

Down

Down on the vale of Death, with dismal cries,
The fated victims, shuddering, roll their eyes
In wild despair; while yet another stroke,
With deep convulsion, rends the solid oak;
Till like the mine, in whose infernal cell,
The lurking demons of destruction dwell:
At length, asunder torn, her frame divides,
And crashing, spreads in ruins o'er the tides."

Or should the vessel only founder upon the rocks, with what increasing anguish does the heart bleed in contemplating the more finished picture. To be complete in all its horrors, we must see the hordes of wreckers, men, women, and children, collected upon the impending cliffs, watching the approach of the vessel towards them with joyous expectation, and at every nearer plunge, insulting, with impious gratitude, the name of their Creator, for the wreck or "God send," which they have the depravity to consider as a mark of divine favour bestowed upon them. The happy moment arrives for them, the ship dashes within their reach, and the busy crowds, regardless of the storm, rush down the craggy shores to seize upon it as their lawful

lawful prize. What scenes of rapacity ensue, are best conceived. In vain does the wretched victim of calamity, the seaman, or the passenger, put in their piteous claim to any portion of their individual property. Without distinction to age or infirmity, or female beauty, they are deprived, without remorse, of that even which the merciless elements have spared!—The ship is ransacked of every valuable that can readily be conveyed ashore; and even should the surviving crew escape without experiencing the effects of their ferocity, they will be considered fortunate. How finely is the contrast drawn between such harpies and the children of untutored sympathy, upon another pathetic occasion.

——" The Grecians on the beach arriv'd,
To aid the helpless few who yet surviv'd:
While passing they behold the waves o'erspread
With shatter'd rafts, and corses of the dead;
Three still alive, benumb'd and faint they find,
In mournful silence on a rock reclin'd.
The generous natives, mov'd with social pain,
The feeble strangers in their arms sustain;
With pitying sighs their hapless lot deplore,
And lead them, trembling, from the fatal shore."

FALCONER'S SHIPWRECK.

Calcareous

Calcareous rocks, disposed in horizontal srata, one above the other to a prodi_ious height, and broken rudely in a perpendicular manner, form the whole extent of rocks along this beach so far as they can be perceived from the coast below St. Donat's castle. In various places the rocks are worn by the violence of the sea into the form of deep hollows, which, from the audible echo they emit when a stone is thrown with violence into them, are thought by strangers to be objects of considerable curiosity. One of those much larger than the rest, is distinguished by the title of St. Donat's cave, being, according to the vulgar report, that into which St. Donat usually retired for meditation; and surely a more desolate spot could hardly have been chosen by the infatuist than this recess among the sterile rocks, to seclude himself from the world and all its blandishments.

While the tide remained low, an opportunity was afforded us, of examining attentively into the

the nature of the calcareous rocks composing St. Donat's cliffs. These abound with extraneous fossils, such as the remains of shells, and various animals. Several different species of the *cornu ammonis* appeared imbedded in the stone, one of which we observed to have a carunculated surface, part of the true shell being retained upon the siliceous cast. But what most struck my mind as being singular, were the fossil fragments of the vertebræ, pieces of the ribs, of the scapula, maxilla bones and teeth, of a prodigious animal of the lacerta or lizard genus, which from the size of those disjointed remnants, when living, could have been scarcely less than twelve or fifteen feet in length. These appeared to be the largest, but fragments of the same animal of much smaller size were not very unfrequent in the fragments of limestone, and masses of indurated marl, scattered loose upon the beach. Emerging from this shore, a cursory view of the church and village of St. Donat's, concluded our survey of this spot. Pursuing from hence a bye road towards

towards the westward through Monk's Nash, a small assemblage of houses about two miles further, another road inclining to the same direction, leads to Dunraven, the seat of Thomas Wyndham, Esq. member of parliament for Glamorganshire. The old manor house, which has been described minutely by Grose and others, would have been the chief object of curiosity in this spot, but this we understood had been lately demolished, and a new house upon a more splendid scale had risen in its stead. This old house would have been interesting to us, if only from the circumstances of its history. In the record of Norman times, preserved by Caradoc in the lives of the Welsh princes, it was called Dunraven castle, and as we learn, was given by William de Londres, lord of Ogmore, to sir Arnold Butler, his steward, together with the manor belonging to it, for having bravely defended Ogmore castle against the Welshmen of Glamorganshire, while his lord was absent on an expedition against the Welsh in the district of Kidwelly.

Kidwelly. For many years Duraven continued in possession of the Butler family, till at length it came to Walter Vaughan, a sister's son to the last of the Butler family. With the Vaughan's it remained some time. The character of the last possessor of the estate bearing that name, is not very favourably spoken of. Report accuses him of the atrocious conduct of putting out false lights to allure the unwary mariners, navigating the channel, to the coast, that they might be wrecked upon his manor. This wicked practice, as Grose tells us, did not escape punishment in this world, three of his sons being drowned in one day, a signal instance of Divine vengeance, as he conceived, that seemed to awaken his obdurate heart to a conviction of the wrongs he had done mankind. Under this impression he retired from the estate, and never returned to it after, but sold it to an ancestor of the family, with whom it now remains.

There are some prodigious caverns of known celebrity

celebrity in the rocks, a mile to the west of Dunraven house, which we proposed to visit, but by the time we arrived at the spot, the tide was too high to permit us entering them. Part of the tract through which our route laid from this place to Ewenny, has a wild and desolate aspect, winding for a considerable way along a deep secluded valley, formed by two dark sloping hills. Limestone is abundant in these hills. There are also other indications of mineral riches contained within the bowels of the earth about this spot, that might afford some encouragement to the adventurous spirit of the miner. In various places contiguous to the village of Bridport, we perceived within the depth of two or three inches only below the surface of the land, calcareous spar, intermingled with little cubic nodules of galena, or lead of that kind, called potter's ore; the veins of which afforded lead in greater plenty, as we had the opportunity of observing, from three to six feet underground.

The

The castle of Llanblythian, or St. Quintin, occupies the brow of a considerable hill, about half a mile to the westward of Cowbridge, this we therefore visited in our return. Of this massive building, the eastern gateway appears to be the principal part left sufficiently entire to convey a tolerable idea of the style prevailing in the original building, and from this it was obviously Norman. A castle is thought to have occupied this advantageous position before the Normans settled here, but I am persuaded there cannot remain a doubt of the gateway before mentioned, and the walls annexed to it, belonging exclusively to the edifice erected here by Sir Robert St. Quintin, with the view of maintaining possession of the share of the lands obtained from Robert Fitzhamon at the time Glamorganshire was conquered. This castle belongs at present to the Windsor family.

There are a few crumbling and half dilapidated walls, which appear to have formed ori-

ginally some portion of the outworks of the castle nearly facing this gateway. The conchologist may possibly find amusement in this spot, as one or two uncommon species of land shells appeared among the ivy interwoven with this ruin.

CHAP. IX.

Newton village, bathing house, and shore.—Interesting objects of natural curiosity, discovered in the vicinity of this spot, insects, fish, &c.—Ogmore castle.—Maritime plants.—Limestone rocks.—Quarrymen,—condition of the labouring poor in this part of Glamorganshire, and their mode of life.—Singular well—Another ride from Cowbridge to the westward.—Golden mile.—Evening priory:—monument of Paganus de Turberville:—tomb-stone of Maurice de Londres, and others of later date:—present state of the church, and conventual house adjoining:—Ewenny house, a newly erected mansion.

THE route usually taken by travellers on a tour of pleasure to the westward, when they leave Cowbridge, lies along the direct turn-

pike road to Pyle and Neath. This we have ourselves pursued on more than one occasion. In our first excursion through Glamorganshire, another more circuitous was preferred, because an opportunity was by that means afforded of visiting certain places that are situated along the southern border of the country. We regained the main road, therefore, in that instance at entering Corntown, and after following its direction till we passed the river Ogmore, another bye road, diverging to the southward, brought us down to Newton, a retired village upon the sea coast near the influx of that river with the Bristol channel.

There is no inn at this place, as we had been led to expect from intelligence obtained before we deviated from the turnpike road; but at a distance below the village one solitary building of public resort, Newton bathing house, rears its diminutive form to view in the midst of an arid desart. The features of the coast are really striking in this respect, nor

is

is the ride to this dreary spot, after passing the village, altogether free from labour, as the way is intercepted with hills of loose drifted sands, that sink knee deep at every footstep, and would fain deny an access even to this lonely habitation.—As a bathing place, Newton possesses, in an eminent degree, the advantage of seclusion. The house is small, and was only fitted up some few years ago by Mr. Marmont, the obliging landlord of Pyle inn, for the reception of a small number of persons, or two or three families at the utmost, during the bathing season. In conformity with this idea, the accommodations are charged for by the week, and the terms are sufficiently moderate, or at least are such as ought only to be complained of by the passing tourist, who feeling no inclination to waste his time in this retired spot, is not best pleased to subscribe the expences of the week for a breakfast, or a dinner.

Newton has a small bay to the eastward of the bathing house. That part of its shore

which lies within the range of the tide, is low, craggy, and profusely covered with tang or kelp. Some few limestone rocks afford shelter to this bay, and it is besides, from its oblique position, much less exposed to the innovations of the drifting sands, than almost any other part of the sea coast extending to the westward from Newton point. The native products both of these rocks and sands, are rather interesting to the naturalist. Among the tang, or marine *algæ*, upon the shore, which consists chiefly of the more common kinds of Fucus, such as vesiculosus, serratus, ceranoides, nodosus, &c. I observed Fucus fœniculaceus, and a variety of Fucus bullatus *. Elegant specimens of corallina officinalis, both of a pink and green colour, appeared in the hollows of the rocks where little pools of the marine element were retained.

Whilst we remained at this place, I pre-

* Lightfoot's MS. and *duplicate herbarium* of British marine plants in the collection of the author:—the principal selection being in the possession of her Majesty.

vailed

vailed upon the fishermen of the adjacent village, to cast their nets several times in the bay, but the result did not entirely answer the expectations we had entertained. Turbots, soles, the small headed dab *, and other fishes of the flat, or pleuronectes, tribe, appeared to be the chief kinds that constantly haunt this shore, with the exception of the sand launce † and small spotted goby ‡. The sprat is found here, though in small numbers, throughout the summer. Various creatures of the Mollusca kind, were brought up likewise from the bottom of the bay in the nets, of which the Sepia media, and two or three species of *asteria*, or sea-star, alone deserve mention.—The beauty of this small species of Sepia, or cuttle fish, when alive, is inconceivably fine; but so evanescent are its colours, that it has acquired, among the earliest writers, the significant appellative of the sea chamæleon. Pliny

* Pleuronectes microcephalus. *Donov. Brit. Fishes.*

† Ammodytes Tobianus.

‡ Gobius minutus. *Donov.*

believed, that through the operation of fear, this creature possessed the faculty of changing its natural colours to that of any place to which it might retreat, and was thus enabled to escape its enemies. When first caught, the eyes, which are large and prominent, glistened with the lustre of the pearl, or rather of the emerald, whose luminous transparency they seem to emulate. The pupil is a fine black, and above each eye is a semilunar mark of the richest garnet. The body nearly transparent, or of a pellucid green, is glossed with all the variety of prismatic tints, and thickly dotted with brown. At almost every effort of respiration, the little creature tossed its arms in apparent agony, and clung more firmly to the finger, while the dark brown spots upon the body, alternately faded and revived, diminishing in size till they were scarcely perceptible, and then again appearing as large as peas, crowding, and becoming confluent nearly all over the body. At length the animal, being detained too long from its native element,

became

became enfeebled, the colours faded, the spots decreased in size, and all its pristine beauty vanished with the last gasp of life.—Excellent trout, salmon, samlets, and sewin are caught in the Ogmore and Ewenny rivers, which flow into the sea at one extremity of Newton bay.

A morning ramble of a few miles in various directions about this shore, furnished other curious acquisitions. Marine creatures of the cancer and oniscus tribe, that are not common, occurred among the low craggy rocks on the sea shore, and what may appear at the first mention still more singular, a variety of strange insects running briskly, or sporting on the wing among the sterile sand hills, at this time exposed to the reverberating heat of the burning sun. Two of these, a nondescript species of *Scarabæus* *, and that uncommonly beautiful insect *Frischii* †, of the same genus,

* Since described by my very worthy friend, T. Marsham, Esq. in his Entomologia Britannica, under the specific name of *Donovani*, Scarabæus nigro-aeneus, elytris punctato-striatis testaceis: sutura limbo apice fasciaque undulata nigris, p. 44.

† Discovered also by Miss Hill, on Braunton Burrows, Devonshire.

were

were of some moment. The latter was observed crawling upon a meagre blade of the common mat-weed *Arundo arenaria*, that had fixed a local habitation on one of the sand hills about a mile to the northwest of Newton bay; near which spot the other was also found, running upon the sands. The dearth of vegetation would hence appear to be of no very material consequence to the increase and nourishment of many insects. Those of the coleopterous, or beetle kind, we are perfectly well assured, live chiefly upon animal matter, and it is highly probable, that the garbled fragments of fishes, molluscæ, and other marine exuvia, occasionally thrown on shore, may furnish a far greater number of insects with animal food, than we are at this time aware of. That our sandy shores afford an ample and most promising field for the investigation of the diligent entomologist, was clearly demonstrated in the course of our walk across the sands, almost every insect that offered to view, being of those species only that

that are peculiar to such situations, and several among them being perfectly new to us. —On the same morning, that curious variety of *Cyclopterus Lumpus*, or common lump-sucker, which is of a pale iridescent sea green, glossed with hues of silver, was captured in a recess among the rocks at low water, about three miles to the northwest of Newton, by one of the labourers employed in a neighbouring limestone quarry *.

A patch

* The colours of this fish are variable. Generally the back is dark blue, black, or purple, becoming paler on the sides, the lower part of which, together with the breast, belly, and lips, are of a rich crimson, or sometimes orange. But the variety above-mentioned, is of a pellucid blueish green colour, without the least trace of red either upon the sides, or belly. In the latter particular this variety differs from the Pavonian sucker of Dr. Shaw [a]; but as it agrees in most other respects, I am persuaded it is of the same kind as that author describes. This green variety was certainly not unknown in England before, because it is mentioned and delineated with much spirit in a curious old book, published about a century ago; a sort of supplement to Robertson's account of all the fishes brought for sale at different seasons of the year to Billingsgate market. Nothwithstanding this, the green variety is very rare. Pallas conceives it to be the common sort in an early stage of growth. On the contrary, Mr. Davies, of Aber, Caernarvonshire, N. W. who communicated this fish to Dr. Shaw, considers it as a permanent variety, and so far as we have been able to ascertain the truth of this opinion, he is correct. The specimen described by Mr. Davies,

[a] *Nat. Mis. t.* 310.—and *Gen. Zool.*

measured

A patch of verdure, watered by some secret spring, and deeply sheltered and embosomed between the sand hills, half a mile to the westward of Newton bathing house, afforded a new little species of sabella; and of insects *Cicindela riparia* in plenty; *Cicindela striata*, an undescribed British species*, *Carabus pilicornis*, and *Carabus semipunctatus*. Upon the adjacent sands, and along the sea coast, we gathered few plants that are not found in equal plenty in other similar situations. Among these, however, were *salix fusca*, or rather the ambiguous variety δ of *Salix repens*, the creeping willow, having entire rounded leaves, that are somewhat villose and glossy on the under surface: *Myrica gale*, *Geranium maritimum* with white blossoms, *Trifolium maritimum*, and a variety of *Trifo-*

measured six inches in length; that which was found on the coast near Newton, was smaller, but Mr. Davies is mistaken in supposing that it never does attain the size of the common lump sucker, for I have seen one taken on the Brighton coast eighteen inches long, which exceeds the usual size of the common kind.

* Since described on this authority as a British insect. Vide *Marsh. Ent. Brit.* 393. *sp.* 7.

lium

lium arvense β. And I likewise found that elegant little plant *Chironia pulchella*, which has not been to my knowledge before discovered in the Principality, upon the heathy rabbit burrows about a mile and a half from Newton.

The ruins of Ogmore castle was included in one of our excursions in this neighbourhood. This is a building of great antiquity, and is spoken of so early as the reign of William Rufus, when it was assigned with the lordship of Ogmore by Fitzhamon to William de Londres. "Ogor Castelle (says Leland) standith on the Est ripe of Ogor, on a playn ground, a mile above the mouth of Ogor, and is meatly welle maintainid. It longgid ons to Lounder, now to the king." Of the present remains I can only say they are very inconsiderable, for the day was far spent before we reached them, and afforded us little opportunity to inspect them with attention.

Leaving this dilapidated pile of ruin, our footsteps

footsteps were once again directed towards the coast, upon which we descended before the evening closed. An incident of novelty, at least to strangers, and which may serve to exemplify, in a striking manner, one peculiar custom of the country, intervened in this walk. We were pacing our route slowly back, to take advantage of the delicious coolness of the evening, rendered doubly grateful after the oppressive sultry heats of the day, which we had nearly spent in perambulating the burning sands, when we were unexpectedly overtaken by a merry party of barefooted females, amounting altogether to about thirty, including girls and women. Most of them being attired in dark blue striped clothes, with scarlet cloaks, and hats of black beaver, in the true style of the south wallian peasantry, their appearance at the first deceived us greatly. There was something truly military in their aspect at a distance arising from this uniformity of dress, and under the deceptive haziness of the evening, we were really for some time persuaded they must be a party of the Bridgend volunteers

volunteers returning from their head quarters, that corps having been under orders in the morning.—Having once overtaken us, the party hastened briskly along, greeting us at parting with a favourite Welsh tune, which they chaunted in chorus with such a vigorous exertion of vocal powers, as convinced us they were determined to banish care. We now perceived that some were on horseback, huddled in pairs or groups of three or four together, the foremost one of which invariably sat astride, to govern the poor little ponies on which they rode with more facility. Others suffered themselves to be drawn along the rugged road in sleds, a kind of vehicle without wheels, which the farmers use in the fields for gathering in the hay, and which, for this purpose, were suspended to the horse, by means of traces made of hay-bands; while the rest walked barefooted, carrying their shoes in their hands. The appearance of this formidable troop of females in such a lonely situation, and at such an hour, excited various speculations in our minds as to the motives they had in view,

knowing

knowing the road they were pursuing would only lead to the dreary extent of sands we were to traverse in returning to the bathing house. But the whole mystery of their rambles was unravelled soon after. They were coming down from the adjacent villages, to enjoy the pleasures of bathing in the open sea in the cool of the evening, and when we crossed the sands, they appeared before us without disguise in the very same predicament as the chaste Diana and her attendant fair, at the moment the youthful Actæon gazed upon the secret haunts of the goddess :—and

——————————— through the glade,
"The fountains fill'd with naked nymphs survey'd."

True indeed, had they been gifted with immortal powers, there would have been no reason to dread the cruel fate of Actæon for our intrusion. The sportive damsels were neither terrified nor amazed at our unexpected presence, and continued their gambols in the water with the utmost indifference and composure, when they found we had no intention of approaching nearer to them than was necessary

sary to pursue our journey.—So far has custom given countenance to a practice not altogether consistent with the refined ideas entertained of female morals in populous towns, or even in the inland parts of Wales. But along this coast the custom of bathing naked in the sea is so prevalent with both sexes, that nothing amiss is thought of it. And surely while the mind remains undepraved by such procedure, the benefits arising from it are not to be disputed: the men along this coast are remarkably hardy, and the women, though not robust, are healthy, strong, and capable of enduring a vast degree of labour.

The peasantry upon this coast find some employment in the increasing demand for limestone, of which there is abundance in this neighbourhood, since the value of this useful manure has become more generally known in the interior of the country. A number of workmen are employed about the rocks in the various process of boring, blast-

ing, and quarrying the stone, after which it is conveyed away by water in that state; or burnt upon the spot, and thus prepared for use. In either case the value of the stone is estimated in the *rough*, and three shillings in the pound, or about one seventh of the net produce is paid to the proprietor of the land for it. The labourers receive from twelve, to fourteen, or fifteen pence per day, a sum not very adequate to the ordinary purposes of life, even in an œconomical country, and a very humble station. Curiosity prompted us to make various enquiries into the domestic concerns of the peasantry about this spot, with the view of ascertaining the mode of life which those poor people are compelled through necessity to pursue. The common food of the cottager appears to be potatoes, for the conveniency of rearing which, a scanty patch or strip of land is considered as a necessary appendage to every little habitation. Oaten cake, and cheese of their own making, are likewise among the principal articles of their provisions. They have eggs in some plenty,

plenty, because they can keep chickens at a small expence, but the temptation to increase the brood, or to dispose of them at a ready money market in the contiguous towns, prevails too strongly to permit them to consume many in their own families. Salted herrings are almost the only fish they eat, for although they live close to the sea, they seldom take the trouble to procure it, and yet they are remarkably partial to cockles, which they dig out of the sands with much more assiduity than would be requisite with the net to take fish in plenty a few score paces further. Meat is indeed a luxury which they seldom taste, except now and then, when they are able to purchase a small joint of mutton with the produce of their eggs and poultry. If at the expiration of a year spent in industry, they are fortunate enough to have reared a "*bacon*," or two, fit for killing at Christmas, that they may have pork for dinner, and the remainder salted for future occasions, it must be considered as no small proof of their œconomy. Strange as it must appear in

this abstemious course of life, sobriety is not one of the most prevailing virtues among this people. It were idle and absurd to talk about the store of ale in the cellars of the cottager; their most common beverage is buttermilk, and sometimes only water. But the truth is, there are many petty ale houses about the country, where the men of this description will too frequently indulge in stronger liquors, to the injury of their industrious wives and children. The heavy, viscid, intoxicating *Cwrw dha*, a sort of ale peculiar to the Principality, they are passionately fond of; and when the opportunity offers, will drink of it to excess. The average price of this liquor is six pence the jug, denominated a quart, but really containing rather less than a pint and a half of the Winchester standard, so that on those occasions, they not unfrequently spend more money in a few hours, than the penurious savings from a week's labour can conveniently reimburse.

Newton

Newton village is only worthy of a visit from the cursory stranger, on account of the well at some short distance from it, by means of which the inhabitants are supplied with excellent fresh water. This is the celebrated well mentioned by Camen, that exhibits the singular phenomenon of ebbing and flowing in a reverse order with the tide of the neighbouring sea; a fact that cannot be disputed. We were witness to this circumstance, the water having sunk at least two feet during the space of six hours in which the sea was flowing up. This decrease, several people told us, was inconsiderable compared with what has been observed at certain times, when it has decreased to the depth of six or seven feet in the course of a single tide, and constantly returned to about the former height, as the sea receded from the shore.

Perceiving there were no other attractions to prolong our residence in this place, it was not without experiencing a real pleasure, that

we embracing the chance of once more exchanging the sterile scenery of sands and water, to which alone we had been accustomed during the three preceding days, for others at least of a more cheerful nature. The country in the way from hence to Pyle, by degrees assumed a livelier aspect, though still betraying certain indications of its vicinity to the coast. Its complete exposure to the violence of the southern breeze, blowing across the sea is manifest, every tree within the tract inclining its head in a northerly direction, as if it were taught instinctively to be obedient to the blast, and thus escape its fury.

Another summer, for the sake of varying our ride, we traversed the customary road to Pyle, after leaving Cowbridge, and were thus enabled to devote some attention to the aged priory of Ewenny, which, standing close to the direct road, and nearly midway between those two places, had been neglected in the former route.

While

While passing over the *golden mile*, a common so called, about two miles to the west of Cowbridge, in the course of this latter journey, the predictions of old Merlin concerning this very spot, occurred to memory. "Upon the golden-mile (says the dark oracle of futurity) three nobles shall lose their heads, *when* boats shall pass up the mountains, and the rocks be changed to bread.—To the ultimate fulfilment of this event, the credulous Cambrian looks with confidence, because he is assured the mysterious conditions of the prophesy has been accomplished.—He has lived to see boats conveyed by means of artificial canals amidst the mountains of Merthyr Tydvil, to the height of two or three hundred feet above the level of the sea, and the bowels of the rocks torn open to extract the ore that has afforded bread for thousands!

There was something awfully sublime, and suitable to the ominous presages of the bard in the tremendous aspect of the country

as we proceeded over the common, for a more gloomy day than that which had been unavoidably chosen for this excursion, had not intervened before upon our journey. It was truly a day of tempests, such as the pen of Ossian could best display in all its wildness and terrific grandeur.—"The gray skirts of mist rolled around"—"darkness settles on the plains,"—"the wind is up, the storm drives the horse from the hill, the goat, the lowing cow. They tremble as drives the storm beside the mouldering bank."—And to confess the truth, I quitted the snug corner of the post-chaise with much reluctance to brave its fury, when the driver had approached as near to the priory gate of Ewenny as the road would possibly allow.

Ewenny priory has the reputation of being the most ancient monastic edifice to be seen in a perfect state throughout Wales, a reputation which we could not avoid observing with unfeigned regret it will not long retain, unless

unless the helping hand of the proprietor of the estate (in whose right it is alone invested) be stretched forth without delay, and by a judicious expenditure of money in some of the necessary repairs, rescue it from destruction.

The exterior wears the frowning aspect of a castle. Its outer walls are massive, dark, and furnished with battlements. The entrance is under a gloomy gateway, which conducts to a spacious court yard, surrounded by those embattled walls. Proceeding across this court yard to one part of the building next the church, we were accosted by some workmen, to whose sole care the place appears to be now consigned, and they were busied in its dilapidation. Of the suite of buildings they were levelling with the dust, to supply materials for the erection of a modern mansion then building for the proprietor, I could not presume to form any very accurate conception: they were undoubtedly

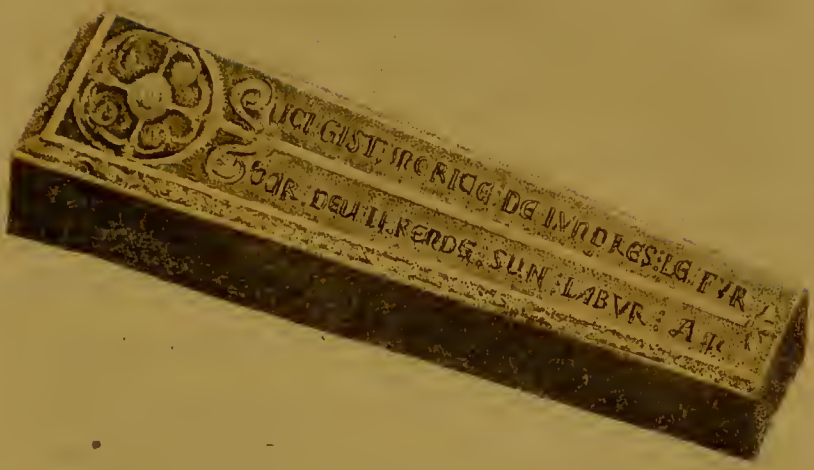
in

in an ancient style of grandeur, as appeared from the remains of ornamented stone work that laid in scattered heaps about the area of the place, and the heraldic sculpture over the arched way * leading to them, the latter exhibiting the insignia of the ancient order of nobility in the structure of the helmet, as we conceived, in compliment to the first founder of the priory who held the title of lord of Ogmore.

At the first entrance into the church, you approach the old monument shewn for that of Paganus de Turberville, one of the twelve Norman knights who conquered Glamorganshire. This occupies a central position in the south transcept facing the side door. The monument is of the altar kind, rising about three feet, or rather less, above the level of the floor, and bears a recumbent colossal figure of a warrior in free-stone, which, when

* Destroyed or taken down in the interval between the summer of 1803 and our visit last year.

complete,



EFFIGY OF PAGANUS DE TURBERVILLE.

MONUMENT OF MORICE DE LONDRES.

and another in

EWENNY PRIORY.

London Published as the Act Directs by E.Dayton, May 1.1805.

complete, must have been nearly, if not quite seven feet in length, and lusty in proportion to the stature. Hence we may safely conclude the effigy to be somewhat larger than the person whom it is intended to represent. The lower half of the legs and right arm are wanting. The features are entirely obliterated, but the chain armour, or mail, is obvious where the gambeson, or upper vest is unfolded: this mail extends down the legs, which proves the wearer to have been of some distinction in the Norman æra. Both the sword and shield are of a great size; the latter is pointed at the lower extremity.—Mr. Grose appears to think this figure may with equal propriety be supposed to commemorate the grandson of the above-mentioned Paganus, as of that hero himself, observing that the grandson was a great benefactor to the monastery.—I am not aware that there is any better authority for this opinion than mere conjecture, and should it absolutely rest on such slender grounds alone, we may with equal prudence adhere to the

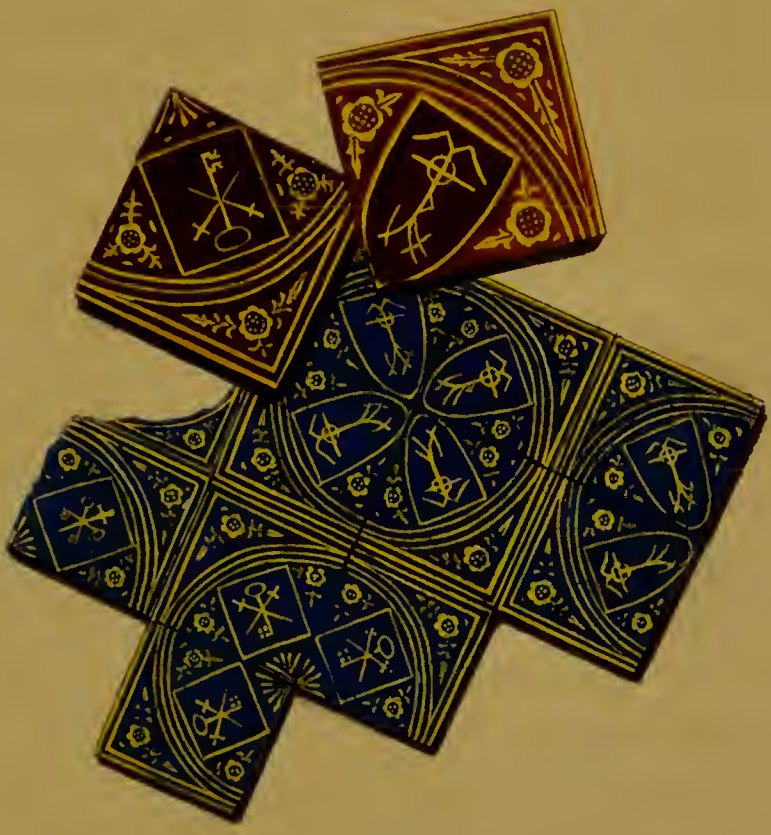
the tradition of the place, which uniformly refers it to Paganus the elder.—A dark stone bearing the figure of the cross, lies on the tomb upon the right side of this valiant knight. If the accuracy of Mr. Grose can be relied upon, the inscription round the border of this stone was in his days only rendered illegible by the dirt that filled them up. We determined to clear away the filth and rubbish that had fallen upon this monument from the broken roof of the building, in the hope of being able to transcribe this inscription, but after some exertion, I had the mortification to perceive, that there were only a few traces of it remaining. Probably it was destroyed in the general wreck occasioned by the fallen ruins. From the structure of the letters, seven of which are still very visible; Grose is evidently mistaken in calling them Saxon characters; they are Norman-french of the eleventh and twelfth century.

This church has been a spacious structure. The

The design was cruciform. A lofty square tower rising in the center of the building, was supported within upon four noble semicircular arches, that sprang from thick clustered columns, and opening to the four cardinal points, displayed at one view to the spectator, standing under the tower, the nave and chancel to the west and east, with the two transcepts one on the north side, and the other to the south. But the fine effect arising from the spirit of this design, has been long since destroyed by blocking up one of the arches, that formerly opened to the nave. This awkward contrivance was intended to separate the nave from the rest of the building, that the former only might be appropriated to the church service. Towards the end of last summer, I found the arch opening to the north transcept had undergone a similar fate, that being also blockaded up by means of a thick wall which completely fills up the arch, with the exception of a square aperture, supposed to be intended for the admission of daylight.

light. The fine arched roof of the chancel was standing in august last. From the injurious effects, however, of the heavy rains in the two preceding winters, all the arches have become loosened, and the removal of a single stone or two, which threaten to fall daily, will, in all human probability, be immediately followed by the downfall of the whole roof in one undistinguished ruin. As they now appear, the arches are in the boldest style imagineable.

The broken pavement observable in some few places upon the floor of the transcepts, is very singular. This appears to be coeval with the earliest part of the building itself. The whole consists of glazed earthen tiles, about ten inches square, all of which are curiously marked with devices, shields, coats of arms, swords, keys, and other emblematic figures in white or yellow, disposed upon a ground of blue and white. Some are red, but these appear to have been originally blue, as the cloudy stains of that colour



EXAMPLES
of the
SUPERB ANCIENT PAVEMENT
in EWENNY PRIORY.

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colour remain still upon them. The fragments of this pavement are not uninteresting, but the appearance of the whole, from the happy combination of colours and figures, was no doubt peculiarly elegant when complete.

The chancel at the east end of the church appears to have been for some time engrossed as a cemetery for the principal gentry of the vicinity, or perhaps of those only connected with the Turberville family. Several monuments adorn the walls, or did till very lately, but in the center of the building one in particular of the altar kind arrests attention. The inscription is in verse, the introductory lines of which apprise us that the deceased to whose memory it was erected, was born the hopeful heir of the estate of Ewenny, though it was the will of Providence he never should enjoy it.

" Here lies Ewenny's hope, Ewenny's pride
In him both flourished, and in him both died;
Death having seized him, lingered, loath to be
The ruine of this worthy family."

The

The conclusion of the epitaph reads thus. "Here lieth the body of John Carne, Esq. son of Edward Carne, and great grandson to Edward Carne, that lieth here deceased, the fourth of June, 1700, aged fifteen years, ten months, and eleven days."

Upon the floor of this choir, close to the north wall, lies an old monument, decorated with a flowery cross in very good condition. The words "Ici gist Morice de Lundres," in the Norman-French character of the twelfth century, is perfectly distinct. Hence it is apparent, that Morice, or as others have it, Maurice de Lundon, who presented Ewenny priory as a cell to the abbey of St. Peter's at Gloucester, in the year 1141, was buried here*.—This monastic edifice derives its name,

* From its obscure situation this monument has escaped the prying curiosity of almost every tourist. Mr. J. Evans is an exception, but he must have examined it very hastily, as he acquaints us that it is a stone coffin, with an inscription to *Roger* de Londres, as founder of the abbey.—This oversight can, however, occasion no mistake whatever, because the Christian name of Roger does not occur throughout the whole pedigree of William de Londres descendants.

according

according to tradition, from the Wenny, or Ewenny river that flows contiguous to this spot. Leland informs us, that it was founded by John de Lundres, lord of Ogmore, in Glamorganhire, shortly after the Normans obtained possession of that country. But most likely he means William de Lundres, the first Norman lord of Ogmore *.

The nave, which is now set apart for the performance of the church service, betrays every symptom of neglect as well as innovation. There was formerly a spacious aile on the north side of the nave, extending under cover of a handsome colonnade of semicircular arches, supported upon pillars, but for some purpose best known to the repairer, all these

* *William*, who assisted Fitzhamon in the conquest of the country, was succeeded by *Simon* his son. His issue was *William*, who at his death succeeded likewise to the estate and titles. *Morice* was the son and successor of William, and with him the male line ceased, for he had only one child, a daughter, who married into the Seward family. The church was certainly built while Morice was possessed of the estate, or before, or it could not have been presented by him to the abbey of St. Peter's, at Gloucester. *Vide "the Genealogy of the Norman Knights*, penned by Sir Edward Stradling." *Powel. Hist. of Wales.*

arches were blocked up with masonry last summer. Of late years the descendants of the Turbervilles seem to have dealt rather scurvily by the "good works" of their ancestors, if in no other instance, at least in suffering this venerable edifice to fall into decay, while at a small expense that might have been avoided. The stranger, when he sees the ostentatious mansion that is now almost finished for the family residence of the proprietor of the estate immediately behind the priory house, cannot avoid thinking, that the church might have been considered also, with much propriety, an object highly worthy of his liberality. As a place of worship, nothing can be more disgraceful. For the want of a few score tiles upon the broken roof, the congregation, when assembled, are exposed in all weathers to the open day, and what must prove still more disgusting, to the filth occasioned by a busy swarm of pigeons kept about the priory, whose dung falls at intervals in showers into the church, where it accumulates through neglect,

neglect, and is suffered to soil the furniture of the pulpit, the pews, floor, and even the communion table, in a most unbecoming manner.

Quitting the church, we obtained admittance, through the medium of one of the workmen, into the apartments still remaining of what originally constituted the ancient priory, for much of this building, as before remarked, has been demolished lately. That part which remains, pretty clearly demonstrates that strength, rather than elegance, or even convenience, was consulted by the builder. The staircases are remarkably steep, most of the avenues dark and narrow, and the apartments to which they conduct, extremely gloomy. Nothing particular occurs here except one apartment of large dimensions, called the armoury. This spacious room was under the hands of modern reformation at the time we saw it, but several of the racks designed for the reception of the arms belonging to the

garrison

garrison in former times, still retained their stations against the walls.

We loitered at Ewenny longer than had been at first intended, and were by that means prevented from visiting Brigend, about a mile further on the upper road to Neath, which place we understood to be the seat of one or two of the most extensive manufactories in the woollen trade of Glamorganshire. An indistinct view of the town presented itself through the rainy mists that lowered upon the face of the country as we rode on to Pyle, where we spent the evening in comfort by the side of a good fire, and for a while forgot the inconveniencies resulting from the unfavourable state of the weather in the early part of the day, during which our cloathes had been twice completely wetted through.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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